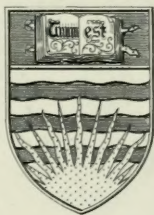


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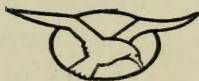
# ABOUT OURSELVES

*Psychology for Normal People*

BY

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"Influencing Human Behavior"*



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## FOREWORD

Is the reader hopelessly perfect? If so, let him close this book. It is not for him. Is he so mentally ill that he requires the careful attention of a psychiatrist? If so, again, let him close the book.

This book is for the rest of us, the in-betweens—the so-called “normals.” It is written out of the conviction that we normal persons need to know a good deal more about ourselves than we ordinarily do. If we are obviously not normal, we get well cared for. Our friends send us to physicians of one kind or another—physicians of the body and physicians of the mind; and if we are fairly lucky, we get patched up and have a blissful time thereafter boring our friends to death with tales of what the doctors did to us.

But if we are normal, no one notices us. And we are too busy at our jobs to notice ourselves. So we grow all kinds of queer malformations in our physical and psychological make-up, which, while they do not prevent us from selling goods over the counter or cooking dinners for the family, nevertheless do a fair amount of damage to ourselves and to those who have the questionable fortune of living with us.

It is the intention of this book to reveal ourselves to ourselves through some of the knowledge that has come to us out of the past fifty years or so of psychological research. Why do we need that knowledge? The question has only to be asked in order to answer itself. We need it because we cannot rightly get along without it.

Let us go back some twenty years. A clumsy looking airship runs along the ground for a few hundred yards; then rises with a heavy, reluctant clumsiness. It wobbles—dips, rights itself, wobbles some more. Then, with a crazy lurch, it swoops with a crash to the ground. Obviously that airship was the victim of inadequate knowledge. What it needed—and what, happily, its companion ships later received—was an intelligent re-shaping of its mechanism.

Are we human airships not a good deal like that? If we look about among us so-called normal people, do we find ourselves, one and all, rising strongly, smoothly, triumphantly on our full mental and emotional power, or are not many of us wobbling more or less precariously in the air? We are worrying ourselves about this, or having an inner conflict about that; we are fussy, or irritated, or gloomy, or disappointed, or frustrated, or prejudiced, or ridiculously conceited. Are we not, perhaps,—most of us—in need of a good deal of mental and emotional re-shaping?

Some of us are married. Do our friends look dolefully upon us and shake their heads? Do we look dolefully at ourselves, rattle our chains sardonically? Are we perhaps planning bigger and better novels on the disillusionments of sex? Some of us are parents. Do we feel altogether proud of the job we are doing? Are Thomas and Geraldine the sweet young things we expect them to be? Do we know what we expect them to be? Some of us are teachers. Do we know just what we are doing to those young victims in front of us? Have we solved our own inner problems previously to solving theirs? Some of us are ministers of religion. Do we know how subtly and bewilderingly the human being gets out of gear? Are we wholly in gear ourselves? Some of us are unmarried women, at an age when marriage should be

our portion. Have we, in the forced abnormality of our lives, found the way to a secure and creative happiness? Some of us, finally, are adolescents—college students, or young people in shop or industry. Do we have to be the restless and confused creatures the books and the elders seem to expect us to be? Can we get hold of ourselves and start going?

It is to answer some of these questions that the following pages are written. They promise no panacea. For this enterprise of casting out our human ills and building up our individual selves, there is no panacea. But human life, I am certain, can be immensely more alive, immensely more interesting, powerful and vital than it ordinarily is. How?

The difficulty with most of us is that we suffer from the familiarity which breeds a dulled awareness. Ourselves we have with us always—and in consequence we know least about ourselves. It is refreshing at times to break in upon this dullness with pictures of ourselves taken from a different angle and with a wider perspective. For by that means the dullness suddenly leaps into unexpected vividness. We are awakened to a different sense of ourselves. Our personal traits are then revealed as determining factors in our lives which are carrying us towards triumph or defeat. It is precisely such a revelatory awakening which the work of the more recent psychology has brought about and which these pages will, in a measure, carry over to the reader.

My obligations in the writing of this book are many. They are chiefly to that fine band of pioneers, who, breaking away from old traditions of abstract thinking about human nature, have opened their eyes and given their help to the actual individuals in the world around them. Some of them are philosophers; others are psychologists and

physicians. I have made acknowledgment wherever possible. My thanks are due to them not only for what I have myself received, but for what this newly emerging enterprise of understanding human life has received through their efforts.

I wish particularly to thank Miss Anne Page for having been patient enough to read almost the entire manuscript. Many of her criticisms and suggestions have been of the greatest value. I must also thank my most persistent—oft-times devastating—critic. If a number of faults have been avoided in this book—as I hope they have—and if some of the ideas seem to possess a wisdom hardly attributable to mere masculinity, the reader must thank my wife.

I am happy in this, that the chapters which follow have all been tried out and seasoned with discussion. As in my former volume, "Influencing Human Behavior," a large group of business and professional men and women in the New School for Social Research in New York City suffered the onslaught of the lectures. Much of what appears here is the result of the suggestions and criticisms of these students; a number of the cases included are their contribution. My thanks are due to all of them, for they helped to make this course in adult education not one in which the lecturer was a little-tin-god-in-a-pulpit handing out predigested wisdom, but one in which the lecturer and the group were co-workers in a common enterprise of research and constructive clarification. It is the hope of the writer that this common enterprise may now, through the printed page, be carried on with far wider effect.

H. A. OVERSTREET.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE NEWER CLUES TO HUMAN BEHAVIOR

The science of human behavior is a new science. It is only just beginning to be born. We have had sciences of mathematics, mechanics, physics, chemistry, biology. We have had more or less successful attempts at sciences of economics and politics. But we have never before, in any accurate sense, had a science of human behavior.

In the past, of course, a great deal was said about human behavior, much of it true and useful. But practically all of it suffered from the fact that it was merely assertive in character. It was in the form of maxims, prophetic utterances, philosophic dicta. Sometimes, when these utterances were the result of keen observation, they were all to the good, as one often finds in the case of such shrewd observers as Socrates, Confucius, Lao Tze, Jesus, Montaigne, Francis Bacon, and others. But when, as frequently happened, they were based upon false inferences, they did serious damage in turning mankind psychologically astray. Such, for example, was the belief that illness was due to possession by demons; or that deceased persons must have sons to perform ceremonial rites for them; or that the aged must be put away lest they be too infirm in the life hereafter; or that women could, as witches, have commerce with the devil. When men believed these things, they not only made mistakes, but they made mistakes which, in many a case, led to a tragic outcome.

A real science—as well as a real philosophy—of human nature could not be born until there were devised techniques of accurate observation and verified experiment. It is now only a little over fifty years—within the lifetime of a good many of us—since the first psychological laboratories were established, the first of them dating from the University of Leipzig in 1879. Now they mount into the hundreds. It is only a little over fifty years since the first psychological clinics were established, largely through the discoveries of Charcot in Paris, Freud and Adler in Vienna, and Jung in Zürich. Now they exist wherever medicine has reached the fruitful conclusion that a host of our diseases are psychological in origin.

The new science of human behavior roots in the study of concrete cases. It is out of such study, carried on in laboratory and clinic with increasingly adequate techniques of observation and experiment, that the newer clues are beginning to come. These newer clues, one suspects, are destined to cast out many old wives' superstitions about human nature, and to supply in their stead clearly verified knowledge which will, in the end, lead our much befuddled egos out of many of their unhappy jungles. The alert minded person of the future will know where to go for wisdom about human behavior. Precisely as he now goes to the laboratory physicist for authentic knowledge of electricity and radio, he will go to the laboratory and the clinical psychologist for knowledge about his psychological self and the psychological selves of his neighbors.

Are there clues that are already available for our use? In what follows we shall confine ourselves largely to what has come out of the clinic. We do this for two reasons. In the first place, the clinician has dealt with the more urgent prob-



lems of human behavior, those arising out of some regrettable defect of functioning. In the second place, the study of these very problems of defective functioning has proved unexpectedly illuminating for an understanding of our so-called normal processes.

I say unexpectedly; and yet this is precisely what we ought to have expected. It is when a smooth-running machine gets out of order that we usually learn most about it. Your particular substitute for a Ford gives a sickening series of thuds, staggers on a few yards, then stops dead. If you have never looked into a gasoline engine before, your education begins at that trying moment when you lift the hood and seek to probe into the mysteries of your ailing motor.

A noteworthy example of the unexpected light cast by the study of abnormal functioning is found in the achievements of Dr. Ovide Decroly of Brussels. Dr. Decroly, in his young medical days, was faced by the pathetic problem of sub-normal children. His interest soon went beyond that of an ordinary physician. It turned from the mere care of their bodies to the development of their minds. The general opinion at that time was that for these poor mental defectives there was no real hope. The most that could be done was to feed and clothe them, and, if you were the parent, to bow humbly before this visitation of an inscrutable God. Decroly surmised differently. He decided to try the unusual experiment of educating them. So he took a number of them to his home, lived with them, studied them, experimented with them. Watching their slow mental processes, he gradually succeeded in working out all kinds of new devices which helped them to learn. And he finally brought them to a condition far in advance of their original, pitiable defectiveness.

But something even more important resulted. Watching, day by day, the slow-moving processes of these mental defectives, as one watches a slowed-up motion picture, Decroly was able to note how the human mind went about its business of learning. The defective child fumbled in the process, dragged his mental feet, went with pathetic slowness; but the way he went about it all was, nevertheless, in essence the normal human way. Decroly was swift to see the significance of this. The education of normal children was notoriously bad—had been bad for generations. Why? Because no one had as yet been able adequately to discover how the child learns. The slowed-up pictures gave Decroly the clues. As a result, patterning upon his experiments with sub-normal children, he began to work out new techniques for the education of normal children. He established a school in which to try out his experiments. That little school in Brussels has since become one of the most illuminating centers in the new movement of education.

I should like in this book to follow much the same method; at any rate, to start off with it and see where it leads. A vast amount of work has been done studying abnormal psychological states. For the most part, the work stops there: it is applied only to the treatment of abnormals. I suspect, however, that if we examine this work shrewdly, we shall find many a clue to the understanding and reshaping of our normal experience.

But is there actually such a thing as a normal person? Many psychologists say no. Every person, they say, is in some respect off the normal. That, of course, is true, if we mean by normal "perfectly functioning." But if we mean by normal the average—the fairly healthy in body and mind—we shall have no great difficulty in using the word.

The average person is not noticeably defective. He would not be instantly classed as neurotic or insane. Nevertheless, as the reader well knows in regard to himself, he is far from being a perfectly functioning creature. It is here that the chief problem of many of us lies. Our maladjustments are not serious enough to make us out as interesting "cases" and to secure for us the best psychological treatment; nevertheless they are there, real enough and persistent enough to diminish our effective energizing and to bring about a good deal of real unhappiness in our lives.

It may help us, then, to see our smaller ills projected on to the larger silver sheet of abnormal behavior. The behaviorists in psychology have pointed out that introspection is often not only a most misleading but a most difficult process. Let the reader sit down quietly in his room and try to think out the defects in his own character or personality. He will find it a distressingly vague process that will probably come to very little. But let him see his own behavior strutting about in the person of someone in whom it is exaggerated into an abnormality, and he will doubtless receive a flash of self-illumination hardly possible in any other way. "To see ourselves as others see us" is hardly within the scope of such ego-centered creatures as we are. But to see ourselves reflected *in* others—as when a father finds a persistent trait exaggerated in his son—can carry a conviction that is instant and curative.

I do not wish to discourage the reader at the outset. But is he willing to see himself "in the large"? Perhaps it may hearten him, if it is suggested to him that in all likelihood he will also, among the pictures presented, discover a good many of his friends.



PART ONE  
TOWARDS UNREALITY



## CHAPTER I

### BACKWARD, TURN BACKWARD

#### How One May Regress to the Infantile

The first picture which we shall cast upon the psycho-neurotic silver screen is that of a young Australian soldier. He had been sent to a hospital for complete loss of speech following shell-shock. He was recovering fairly well under treatment, when there occurred a series of severe air raids, which threw the hospital into confusion and made necessary the hurried removal of the patients. As a result of this second fright, the young Australian underwent a startling transformation.

He became as a child. Literally so. He lost completely the power to speak. Given a pencil, he was utterly at a loss to know what to do with it. He seemed even to have forgotten the use of the ordinary things about him, which he examined with a kind of mingled curiosity and timidity.

He walked jerkily, with feet planted widely apart; and if he was not supported, he would quickly slip down and crawl about, as a child does, with the aid of his hands.

He could not even feed himself, and when fed by his nurse, insisted that she taste each spoonful first. "He played in a childish manner with various objects, making toys of them, and he quickly adopted and became very devoted to a small doll kept as a mascot by a neighbor in the ward."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McDougall, William: *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 286.

Here, then, is an instance of complete breakdown from adulthood. It is a case of so-called *regression to the infantile*. This young Australian was not feigning. He *was* a child. It was as if all that had been slowly built up in the course of his normal growth had been suddenly swept away and he had been pushed back to the physical and mental condition of a helpless infant.

At first blush such a case seems to bear no likeness whatever to anything which happens in ordinary life. And yet a more careful scrutiny shows it to be only an aggravated form of what takes place with a fair degree of frequency in far more lives than we ordinarily imagine.

In scores of ways we slip back to modes of behavior which have no proper place in adult life.

### *Pushing Off the Disagreeable*

I have in mind a certain woman who would not in any sense be considered a "case" by a neurologist, but who undoubtedly suffers from a form of what might be called infantilism in normal life. She confesses that she never approaches a new task save with the impulse to postpone it. If it is to write a letter, she will do something else first. If it is to ring someone on the 'phone and arrange for an engagement, she will decide to do it later. If it is to make a decision, she will put it off as long as possible.

Somewhere in this woman's childhood there was a failure in education. An examination of her life reveals an oversolicitous mother. "Helen, you must not go out without your rubbers." "Helen, you had better be home by five o'clock." "Helen, I think you had better not wear that color. It is a little too violent."



At forty-five, Helen still wants things decided for her. Being unmarried, she has no husband to take the responsibility. Hence she shirks. Every new task holds terrors. She pushes it off; procrastinates; hopes that the new thing will somehow not have to be faced.

This woman has lived only a part life, one of constant shrinkings from achievement, constant fears of attacking and mastering the new. The curious fact is that when she does settle down to her tasks, she gets them done with a fair degree of success. The letter turns out not to be such a bugaboo after all, the decision, despite its looming terrors, a rather interesting one to have made. The lions in her path, in short, prove to have been, after all, only stone lions. But, always, the next time, the lions are there again—real ones, until she becomes absorbed in the task, when they turn once more into harmless statuary.

Normally, this woman is grown up; but when there is a situation to be faced, she suddenly slips back into the condition of childish timidity and irresolution. This case is typical of millions.

Such is the business man who starts the morning by arranging his desk, placing the letter-opener here, the stamps there, brushing off the scraps on the blotter, lighting a cigar, going out to take a drink of water, all for the sake of postponing the inevitable moment when he must buckle down to the writing of a report or to the organization of a plan. He is at that moment like the little child who makes every conceivable excuse in order to stave off as long as possible the inevitable home-work. "Pushing off the disagreeable," then, is a kind of slip-back to childhood.

*Tantrums*

Our second form of regression is also not unusual. I have just learned of a gentleman from New Jersey who has developed a technique for getting his domestic wants realized. He happens to be European by birth and nurture. In Europe he apparently learned that a woman's place is at her master's feet. So when his Wiener Schnitzel is too tough or his coffee too tepid, he flies into a rage, throws down his knife and fork, and stalks out of the house to a neighboring restaurant.

Tantrums. What are they? In the child, we know, they are the sign of a kind of fury of impotence. The child wants something. The thing is refused. The child cannot bear to accept the refusal. Instead of facing the situation squarely, trying to get what he wants by the longer ways that are calm and considering, the child flies into a rage and tries to secure his ends—often does secure them—by making a nuisance of himself.

Do adults, on occasion, make nuisances of themselves? Surely a dozen cases will leap to the reader's mind of grown up spoiled babies, of adults who use the technique of impotent childhood to get what they want.

*Misery Long Drawn Out*

Closely allied to the tantrum is the whine. It has less fury and is slower in tempo; but it is, if anything, even more deadly. It, too, is a peculiarly childish trait, caused likewise by the frequent impotence of the child in the face of circumstances which he cannot yet master. A whine, like a tantrum, is never a facing of a situation squarely. It is not an attempt to find out the facts, to

estimate the values. It is a flight into low-gearred rage.

Fretful old ladies exhibit it. They are aged; neither their bodies nor their minds are what they once were. Their charm is vanished; their authority is broken. So they go about fretting, using the excuse of every trifle to vent their low-gearred rage at a situation which they are impotent to change.

Unsuccessful men frequently take to whining. I have in mind the case of a fairly brilliant man. For one reason or another things have not gone well with him in the firm of which he is a member. He has been denied opportunities he doubtless should have had. He has been embittered. And he takes it out in whining. He whines to his friends about it. In his family life, he transfers the whine to domestic matters. He has thereby become a long-drawn-out domestic pest. His little boy now whines. And his wife shows the inevitable marks of the marital misfortune.

Here is a case where the disappointed adult apparently needs to face his facts. How much of the lack of opportunity may have been due to personality faults in himself? How resolutely might he have taken the situation in hand and forced his opportunities? To how great an extent is he living in a fool's paradise of what he might have done had he been given the chance?

Whining is a way of escape. It is low-grade, substitutional satisfaction. It is a kind of anodyne for wounded spirits. It, too, is a regression to the infantile.

### *Self-Indulgence*

When the mind breaks down in insanity, one of the most frequent symptoms is a loosening of the controls built up

by our civilized life. The insane person often becomes gluttonous or violent or utterly shameless. But also, in infancy, before the mind is built up, there is likewise a wish for complete uncontrol. The hardest parental battles are with the appetites, not only for food, but for all the things dearly loved by the child—play, excitement, sweetmeats, staying-up. Parental restraint arouses anger. "Just wait till I grow up," is the resentful boast of a small boy. "I'll eat all the candy I want. Nobody'll stop me!"

Self-control is gradually built up out of two factors. In the first place, the individual is compelled to adjust himself to his human environment. He cannot take whatever he pleases, for others want things as well. He cannot ride roughshod over other people. They rise up and smite him. Thus if he is to live at all, he must surrender as well as take. In the second place, he is compelled to adjust himself to his natural environment. He must keep his body fit, must learn to fashion the tools of his mind. Otherwise Nature casts him out.

So he learns after awhile that he cannot eat all the pies he wants, nor go to all the parties in which his heart delights. He has, perforce, to buckle down to reasonable, disciplined living. A child has delightfully expressed this very trait of childish wish for complete liberation from restraint in the following poem.<sup>1</sup>

"I would always be swinging on gates,  
I'd swing and swing all day,  
And I would never go to school,  
If I had my way.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Virginia Harriss (aged 9); in *Singing Youth*, p. 31.

"I'd be playing all the night,  
I'd be playing all the day,  
I'd never stop to work,  
If I had my way.

"Mother said I couldn't eat or sleep,  
But I just say Ho! Hey!  
I would not have to eat or sleep,  
If I had my way."

Consider two typical conditions in which grown-up persons tend to regress from the state of adult, disciplined self-control. The first is a condition frequently found in old people. As the stress of conflict subsides, they begin to succumb to indulgences. They eat too much. They seek the soft places,—the stuffed armchairs and the cozy corners. They substitute the convenient car for the walk. They drop to lighter reading.

Perhaps one ought to be indulgent to this condition since old age is after all approaching a second childhood, and regression is therefore to be expected. And yet there is the type of old person in whom the fine, vigorous controls of mature life are maintained to the end,—the active old man, for example, who eats sparingly, does his stint of muscular work, keeps out in the open, walks to his business, and refuses to let his mind drop to the level of the tabloid. On the whole, it seems reasonable to suppose that old people can, if they wish, push off the return to the infantile for a far longer period than is frequently done.

The second condition is one with which there is doubtless a good deal less call for sympathy. It is a condition frequently found among the wealthy. Among them, there is no longer the sharp struggle with an exacting environment.

They have made their fortune—or had it made for them. They are taken care of by their money. Their money is like a kindly parent. It “works for them while they sleep.” It tucks them into their bed, gives them their food and clothing, brings them their toys. It is even better than a parent. It does not forbid them anything. Hence, far more than in their childhood days, they are really free. They can have pretty much anything they want,—clothes, horses, yachts, parties, sex-delights; and what is far more, they can have the power to display all these things to the other grown-up infants of like kind.

No doubt we all have this trace of the child in us, the wish to have things, effortlessly and limitlessly. Nature seems so like a Big German Policeman with a *Strengst Verboten*. Deeply grounded in us is the wish to escape this Policeman and have our fling with life. Nevertheless, it is a little significant to realize that the two conditions in which this wish for complete unrestraint of our appetites is strongest are childhood and insanity.

Whether we like it or not—and this is no place in which to moralize—it is fairly clear that self-indulgence is a form of return to the infantile. The really mature adult resolutely faces the life-necessities. These may be hard and may require control; but he is athletic enough of mind to meet them. In so doing, he develops a certain *achievement-fiber*.

### *Great Boast, Small Roast*

Let us note now a somewhat different type of regression in normal life. The child has the rather urgent need for finding a place in the sun for his diminutive personality. Everything around him is bigger than he. His parents

dominate him with their bigness. His teachers overpower him not only with the bigness of their bodies, but with the bigness of their authority. The furniture is made for people bigger than he, the knobs on the doors for people taller than he. There are books and newspapers around him to which these bigger people seem to have easy access, but which baffle him with their strange incomprehensibility. On all sides he is made to feel that he is an infant still not grown up.

One of the amusing, though often annoying, characteristics of child life is a proneness to boasting. It is pretty well agreed among psychologists, following Adler's acute analysis, that the child's boastfulness is an effort to compensate for his feeling of inferiority. The child is trying to prove to a world overwhelmingly superior, that he, too, is a creature worth noticing. Now, it is characteristic of a child's boasting that it is, like his sense of values, fairly crude. "I've got a bigger boat than you." "My father's got more money than yours." "I can lick all you fellows easy."

We all passed through this stage—unless we were more than usually cowed. Then we grew beyond it into an adolescence and adulthood in which boasting was obviously bad form. Not that the effort to find for ourselves a place in the sun ceased. It simply took subtler forms. If some of us were fortunate enough to achieve secure distinction, even the subtler forms of self-display were no longer necessary. Our achievements then spoke for us. But even those of us who still felt the need to impress our superior qualities upon our fellows never dreamed of referring to ourselves as the "Champion Business Man of the World"; or "The Best Solver of Mathematical Problems in any University Department"; or the "Most Graceful D ebutante on all the

Ball Room Floors of Europe and America." Sometimes an adult will refer to his wife as the Best Little Woman in the World; but that is at once recognized as hyperbolic baby-talk.

But there come times when this type of boasting seems to return upon us. The man who swaggers a bit when he tells of his state having the biggest yield of pork in the world; or of his city having the largest university with the largest crop of students; or of his factory having built more and better talking machines than any other factory in Europe or America, is obviously slipping back from his adulthood into a childish stage of claiming a smashing superiority.

Of course our boasting does not always take a form as crude as this or as publicly displayed. Usually we reserve the privacy of the family for our moments of privileged infantilism. A wife, after all, is fairly indulgent. If we tell her, then, that we are far and away the brainiest worker in the whole department; that some day we'll make those other chaps sit up and take notice; in fact that we have half a mind to go to the chief and tell him a few things, it is obvious that we are simply sloughing off our wearisome adulthood for awhile and slipping back some thirty or forty years to the days of grand and glorious and irresponsible showing off.

### *The Bully*

Bullying is boasting with one's fists,—or whatever substitutes for fists can be found. "You don't think I'm boss here, eh? Well, take that and see how you like it!" Bullying is essentially self-display, achieved through sheer domination.



The smaller child hates a bully. But then he himself is not big enough to be one. There is a grave temptation in being physically big—when the mind and the social sense are still unformed. It is so easy in childhood to snatch the toys; to plant a swift blow; to turn a fragile wrist. One wins the notable distinction of being feared by all.

I have in mind a certain officer in a department who fawns upon me when I come in. I am not his chief; but I happen by the grace of a kindly administration to be sufficiently above his level of employment to be regarded as a superior. At times, as I have left the room, I have heard him order about his subordinates with words, which, if translated into blows, would easily have knocked them down. A grown-up bully. A little person trying to be recognized as big.

One of my earliest childhood memories is of a tall, red-headed foreman whose chief asset was bawling out his men. My father happened to be one of his subordinates; and I had a child's sense of the impotent rage that burned in the souls of those men. I wanted to strike him dead myself. But there he was—the "big stiff"—unreachable by the poor chaps under him whose slightest peep would have meant discharge.

A case which I have been following is that of a woman who has been trying to keep her love-life from going to smash. She is married to a husband who is high in social standing. People who do not know about him like him. "Delightful chap—clever and sympathetic." But the delightful chap who is so clever and sympathetic in public, gets rid of his repressions at home. There he is a bully. He is mentally cruel to her; sarcastic, insulting, cuttingly deprecatory. What she is trying to do is to save the children and as much

of her love-life with him as can be salvaged. What she must do, of course, is not to be afraid, not to show weakness, for a bully thrives on fear.

Bullying, whatever form it takes, is an effort to gain power not by intelligently meeting the demands of the situation—coöperating with the other person, trying to understand him, realizing his rights and his possibilities, but by violently dominating the situation. The grown-up bully shows that his mind, like the child's mind, is too undeveloped to grapple effectively with the situation that confronts him. Hence his only resort is to a blustering violence that terrorizes into submission.

### *Rattles*

A significant case of regression to the infantile took place during and immediately following the World War. A pleasure-wave swept over Europe and in large measure over America. Both young and old, in the intervals of their heavy responsibilities, seemed to go pleasure-crazy. Dancing, gaming, drinking, a letting loose of normal sex and social restraints occurred in the war-weary countries. The reason was obvious. It was an avoidance-reaction, a way of escape. The burdens of normal, grown-up life seemed too heavy to bear, the fears of the future too terrible to face. Soberness meant remembering. Seriousness meant sticking to tasks one would much rather have shunned.

Hence it is not surprising that the moments of relaxation were marked by a regression to the childlike. The child loves sensory stimulation—rattle, rocking-horse, merry-go-round, loud noises, clashing music, shoot-the-chutes, somersaults. The grown-up child substitutes for these the sensory stimula-

tion of the jazz dance, heavy drinking, gambling, sex-riotousness and the rest.

The war is over; but much of the avoidance-reaction apparently remains. There has been disillusionment, a disgust at the ever-recurring stupidities of governments, a sense that it all may happen again. The older, vigorous attitude of facing an imperfect world and trying to straighten it out seems for the moment to have gone. In its place, apparently, there is the attitude of "Why worry?" and the abandonment to forms of sensory stimulation that recall the carefree joys of childhood. One may seriously ask, then, whether the present age does not show a marked regression to the infantile for the simple reason that, unable to face its baffling problems of reconstruction, it takes the easier way of a "flight into pleasure."

### *Infantile Humor*

Let us turn now to humor. That will at least be more cheerful. Is there such a thing as regression to the infantile in humor?

Humor in childhood necessarily concerns itself with fairly crude relationships. The child's associative system is still largely unformed. He lives mainly in the world of the senses. Hence the chief incongruities present to his childish experience are those of bulk and movement. Toppling things over will send him into peals of laughter. Punching something and hearing it squeak; hitting something or somebody on the head; making something to disappear; tripping up somebody; pinning something on somebody's back; twisting the cat's tail,—these are the earliest forms of humor in the individual's life because they deal with incongruities in

visible or audible form; and these are the only incongruities which as yet appeal to the child.

Adult humor, on the other hand, is more largely a humor of ideas, because the adult lives more richly in a world of meanings. Hence we may say that the nearer humorous situations are to the purely physical—as in the practical joke—the nearer such humor is to the infant's level.

The Mutt and Jeff and the Katzenjammer Kids types of joke are almost wholly infantile. The custard pie; the endless chase; the tumbling over banisters; the plunging through skylights; the knocking down with a policeman's billy are all forms of humor which mark a regression to a childhood stage. Of course, as we shall see in our next chapter, there are some persons who never even grow up.

#### *Other Forms*

There are many other forms. There is, for example, the child's way of crying after the damage is done. The adult says "It's no use crying over spilled milk." At least he says it. But here is a man who dispenses gasoline at a station. He is responsible to his company for the amount of gasoline sold. When he balances his cash received with what the meter records, he finds that he is one dollar and thirty-five cents short. Thereafter, for at least two hours, there is no living with that man. He fumes; he swears; he is blue; he is ugly. The only difference, apparently, between him and a child is that he does not actually howl and weep bitter tears.

Then there is a certain "Greenwich Village" type of regressor. He cannot bear to put up with the restraints of society. He wishes to be freed from convention. But his

freedom is only of the child's immature kind; it is freedom *from* something. It is not, in any great human sense, freedom *for* something.<sup>1</sup>

### *Not So Far Back*

In the foregoing, we have noted only those regressions that go back to the infantile condition. But of course one need not always go back so far. Thus one can simply regress to lower standards. A man marries a woman who is society-minded. In ten years he has regressed from his standard of high mental effort to the tittle-tattle of the bridge table. A scientist starts out with glowing enthusiasm for research. He, too, marries and begets children. In ten years, he has slumped to the position of a salary-earning college professor, glad of any chance to earn some extra pennies, and only now and then a little wistful over his old enthusiasms. A young man goes into the law fired with the wish to make law a worthy instrument of his citizenship. But law, as has been cynically said, has a curious way of beginning in ideals and ending in deals. He slides back. A girl, brought up with modern ideas and equipped with a fine mental training, undertakes a household. Babies come; the husband makes demands. In all too short a time, her fine plans for keeping up her mental life go a-glimmering. She regresses to the mentality of a household drudge—a "housewife," as someone has called her. A boy has gone to college. He has entered with fresh enthusiasm, and an eagerness to know. Then the process of pouring in begins.

<sup>1</sup> See Martin, E. D., *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, pp. 110, 133, for interesting types of regression in our educational, social and æsthetic life.

At the end of four years he is so sick of learning that he never thereafter picks up a book unless it be a detective yarn or a cheap romance. College, instead of keeping him growing, has actually made him regress.

### *Summing Up*

And so, grown-up life, we note, often has a tendency to drop back to its earlier, less adequate stages. Usually those who drop back do so because they are unable at the moment to face the grown-up situation in a really grown-up way. Recall the Australian soldier. The grown-up situation required that he confront danger. He could not do it. And yet, on the other hand, he could not simply run away. That would have marked him irretrievably as a coward and a deserter. So, in a curiously mysterious way, his body generated symptoms of disease. They were symptoms which obviously incapacitated him and forced his removal to safety. Thus he took his "flight into honorable disease."

We have here a pattern which seems to run all through life. In all kinds of situations, the adult, confronted by an issue or a requirement, fails to use the grown-up technique of intelligent mastery. He pushes off the disagreeable; or he flies into tantrums; or he whines; or, released from restraints, he over-indulges himself; or he bullies, or makes his "flight into pleasure;" or he drops down from standards which require effort of will and concentration of intelligence. In each case he excuses himself; in each case he has a "reason why." In other words, as in the case of the soldier, he develops symptoms which relieve him of the necessity of vigorously and intelligently confronting his situation.

If we were to build the picture of a truly matured personality, we should undoubtedly insert, first and foremost, *the power to face situations squarely*. After all, that is the primary test of organic effectiveness. The timid flee, the lazy shirk, the incompetent wonder what to do, the irresponsible kick up their heels and have a good time. The effective personality meets a situation squarely and masters it through his intelligence.

Not all regressions are of this evasional type. Some are simply returns to a childhood form of functioning. The grown-up, in these cases, seems too immature of fibre to keep up his adult life. He slips back. We have seen that happen in the case of regression to boasting and to childish forms of humor.

But the reader will be shaking his head at all this. Are there to be no cakes and ale? Is there to be no return to the childlike? No playing? No jokes? No loosening up? Are we to be solemnly and hopelessly grown up?

Far from it! The answer to these questions should be fairly clear. Regression to the infantile is not just a return to the childish; it is a return to the childish for the sake of accomplishing something by infantile means when the situation actually calls for adult intelligence.

But to get down on one's hands and knees and play bear with one's children; to dress up in masquerade; to kick a football; to dive in with the youngsters at the old swimming hole—all these are vastly different. Or again, to recover something of the freshness and innocent zest of the child's approach to life—that, too, is different. Also, there is the need for rest and recreation. Hence it is good, at times, for us to forget the serious concerns of adult life, good to

play. But to meet one's problems with a four-year-old technique when one is a forty-year-old; to be a child when one needs to be a responsible adult—it is that which makes life so often futile and pathetic.

The reader, of course, never regresses! But his friends? Can he cast a wicked eye upon them and catch them at their slippings-back? There are many more ways than have been mentioned in which people slip back. Can the reader find more?

And if he should, perhaps, discover a bit of backward slide in himself, can he find out why the slide happens? Also, what is best to be done when there is this subtle temptation to shrink from full adulthood and run off into one's childhood corner?

How can we grown-ups stay grown up?



## CHAPTER II

### HALTING THE EXPEDITION

#### Fixations in Normal Life

Falling in love seems to be easy enough for most of us—perhaps much too easy. Not so for a certain young man of twenty-eight, who is our second picture upon the psychoneurotic screen. He is unable to fall in love. Otherwise he is a thoroughly normal person, with a clear mentality, excellent habits, and fairly high ideals. But he cannot seem to achieve that which is apparently the goal of a young man's life.

For a number of years he has been cast into a disquieting shame. He sees himself as a creature apart. He has suspicions that he is sexually impotent. His anxiety has been growing in him, until he has become neurotically out of gear, shunning society, harboring obsessions. He tells his physician, with a sort of bewilderment, that he frequently hates his parents, although they have been the kindest parents in the world. He longs for a normal adult love-life; but, for some mysterious reason, he seems not to have the power to achieve it.

Here, then, is the case of a person who apparently, in a very vital aspect of his life, is unable to grow up.

What is the matter with this young man? We are not interested here to enter into the psychological intricacies of his

peculiar case. There is an abundant literature available, and the young man is in the hands of a capable psychiatrist. Briefly, of course, he is the victim of some early sexual maladjustment. Such maladjustments occur for various reasons. Sometimes they are caused by a sexual shock in early childhood which is repressed and later completely forgotten. Sometimes they come from an unwise parent who does not realize that the kissings and huggings which can be safely given to a child before the specific sex-zones are developed cannot be given with equal safety during the period when those zones are maturing. If the parent does not know this and keeps up the endearments at this flowering time of life, there may easily occur what is called "parent fixation."

It is not all this, however, that we are interested to note in the case of this young man, but simply one clear fact: *in a very vital aspect of his life, he is unable to grow up.* He has become fixated, as we say, at an immature stage. And therein lies his peculiar tragedy—unless, indeed, he can be so prodded alive that he begins to move on.

This is obviously a psychopathic case. But are there such fixatings, such examples of arrested development, in normal life? In order to discover them, it is important, I think, first of all, to get a clear picture of the typical movement of human life, a picture that is clarifying for the whole human enterprise.

### *From Level to Level*

Human life, we find, is a more or less continuous process of having to pass beyond certain stages. For example, the breast-fed infant must pass beyond the breast to the bottle.

That passage is now usually accomplished without distress to the child because it is made, not with a sharp change from one to the other, but by gradual stages. Then there must be a passage beyond the bottle to solid food eaten with spoon and fork.

Again, after a number of months or years in which the child remains at home, going and coming freely, falling asleep when he pleases, bound only by family requirements, he must pass into the school, with its large groups of children, its need for concentration and time-schedules. Here, too, the change may be abrupt and unprepared for, awakening fright or rebellion in the child; or it may be gradual and delightful. In any event the normal child must move on.

Another growth-stage is reached when the child must leave school and enter a life of self-support. In the school or college, he has been comfortably financed by his parents; his food, his shelter, his clothing have come automatically. Here again, unless there is an adequate getting ready, there may be a fear of the unknown, a shrinking from that which has not the warm security of the school and the home. Nevertheless the normal youth must move on.

After the job, or often with the job, come the responsibilities of married life. This again is a new level. And it is here, more than often, that one finds a sad inability to grow. I once knew a couple who were still so young and irresponsible that they would tuck the baby in at night, and, leaving it alone in the house, would run out to a card party. Fortunately for them the house did not catch fire. In later years they looked back upon what they had done with horror. Here was an unpreparedness. They had not really attained to the parent level.

We need not pursue the process farther. Healthy human

life, in brief, goes by *growth-stages*. For a few months or a few years the individual lives on a level where the functioning is very much of the same kind. Then it becomes necessary for him to move on, to climb up, as it were, to another level; and then again to another. An individual fails whenever, at the normal time and under normal circumstances, he refuses or is unable to make the necessary movement forward. He is then said to remain fixated.

### *Erotic Fixations*

Let us turn first to the more particular consideration of sex. Are there sex-fixations in normal life? Sex, like all the rest of our life, goes by growth-stages. Speaking broadly, there is first of all the prepubertal stage. This is followed by the stage of adolescence, which in turn is followed by the stage of mating. Obviously, then, in all of us, the sex-life has a career ahead of it of mounting from level to level. Are there ever dead stops in the mounting?

Since our profoundest problems center in the mating process, let us turn directly to that. Mating has both a preliminary stage and a goal. The preliminary stage is "falling in love." The goal—it is rather precarious in these sceptical days to say precisely what the goal of mating is—would seem at least to be something more than the mere falling in love.

Now falling in love is a notoriously fascinating experience, so much so, indeed, that we have developed the art of calling attention to it in all kinds of highly pleasurable ways. Most novels exist solely for that purpose; most plays and films.

Let us pursue a romantic hero of fiction. He is a faller-

in-love. That apparently is his sole occupation and entire excuse for being. All his activity is simply a leading-up to the moment of final, erotic triumph. When that triumph is accomplished—when the obstacles are overcome and the girl is won—the film flickers out, or the book ends. So far as the romance is concerned, the hero's life is done. And to-morrow evening we shall take up another hero and follow him likewise to his erotic triumph.

But suppose we refused to let the film flicker out or the book close. We wish to know what becomes of our hero afterwards. What, now, is he to do? The good fight is fought, the lady is captured, the blissful kiss is kissed. If he is to go on, he cannot go on blissfully kissing forever. He must do something else. What? Art, apparently, for the most part is not able to answer that puzzling question. And so it wisely and a little hastily closes the story and bids us good night. Romantic art, in short, almost invariably *fixates* at the erotic, falling-in-love stage. Practically all of its heroes, left upon that level in arrested development, *are never permitted sexually to grow up*. Sometimes we wonder whether their authors grow up.

Fictional art is a powerful means of establishing psychological associations. Novels and dramas give us intense pleasure. Since, now, they associate the pleasure they give with this one particular kind of experience, it is not surprising that a certain habit of thought is developed in us—the habit of regarding erotic experience as the one experience which is of consummate value. When, therefore, we are denied the fulness of it, as when convention bids us be faithful to one mate, we tend to resent the stern restriction. We ask what right convention has to bully us into the loss of the most precious thing in life. If we have a literary

gift we write novels about it. If we have no literary gift, we read the novels that the rebellious ones write, and through them justify our restless desires. And it seems as if we were right. Why should we not have all of sex that we desire?

### *Being in Love with Love*

Before we try to make a hesitant answer to this challenging question, let us return for a moment to the curiously fascinating process of falling in love. It is a question whether there is not a good deal of self-delusion about it. I am not sure. Perhaps in what follows I shall be accused of going beyond what is warranted by the facts. And lovers, I know, will hotly dispute the assertions I shall make. Nevertheless, I venture. The following, it seems to me, is true about first—perhaps also about a good many later—fallings-in-love. Early love-arousal is usually not, in a profound and lasting sense, a love *of the other person*. It is rather, if I may express it paradoxically, a *love of the lover himself*. Or perhaps, a little less cryptically, it is a *being in love with the act of loving*. I mean by that that every young person reaches a stage at which the growth into puberty arouses more or less intense bodily desires. The desires cry out for satisfaction. If a suitable creature is near-by, the desires shape themselves into an imperious demand to possess that creature. If no suitable creature of the opposite sex is near-by—as in boarding schools and prisons—the desires will seek their satisfaction in abnormal ways. It is *bodily desires*, in short, that cry out for release and gratification. If, now, the suitable creature does happen to be at hand, the lover will proclaim his undying devotion. He

*thinks* he is in love with *her*. He does not know that actually what he is in love with is the ecstasy of loving.

That is why, when his ecstasy is over and his desires are slaked, he will frequently cast off the person for whom he has been passionate. The reason, of course, is that the deep-lying thing that he loved was not the person, but his own tumultuous self-gratification. If he does not pass beyond that condition to a further stage, he remains fixated on an erotic level, where he forever seeks and is unable fully to gratify his seekings.

### *Creative Love*

What of this next stage? Fictional art, as we have seen, leaves us almost entirely in the dark about it. The romantic artist refuses to grow up, persists in remaining adolescent. Morality, also, not only leaves us in the dark, but it angers us. It bids us be "pure"; warns us not to commit adultery; admonishes us, at our peril, not to desert our wives or our husbands. Negatives, every one, with a dash of threat in them all! And then our common speech completes the picture with phrases that make us yawn. It talks to us of "settling down," "assuming obligations," "supporting a family," and "becoming a good citizen." As if prospects like these could make any one very eager to leave the delights of falling in love for this questionable enterprise of staying in love.

Can the next level actually be as satisfying as the falling-in-love level? We are assured by the moralists that it can be; but we seem to distrust the assurers because they appear to have a moral axe to grind. They wish to cool our philandering blood. On the other hand, we get no help from the artists, for they simply stay on the romantic level.

We must, perforce, look into the matter independently of artist and moralist. If there is a next level of the sex-life which is to be reached, what does one do there? The obvious answer is that one enters another life. Is entrance into another life a fascinating thing? One can only speak for oneself. As I look around me, I seem to find that the one thing which deepens life, which gives it "resonance," which brings it great joy, is the putting oneself outside oneself into another personality. It is this *identification with another personality*, and not simply bodily gratification, to which the whole sex-process seems fundamentally to point. The two persons really mated are now one—and yet also two. If marriage is of this identifying sort, the "oneself" becomes "ourselves," and the "I" becomes "we two," in a very actual and vital sense. A woman who dearly loved her husband once told me that in "those first days of married life" something almost mystical happened. The rather sad, timid, turned-in self she had been for thirty years flew away. She almost waved to it, its departure was so real; and a very joyous, confident self, that was her husband's self and her own new self combined, came into being.

If mating fails of this, it seems that it is no real mating. If it does achieve it, then a kind of conjoint personality is developed which, in the highest sense of the word, is creative of new values in life. Sex-life, it seems to me, does not reach its full possibilities unless it reaches this level of creative love.

And then there are the children. Suddenly, on a day, one finds a living creature that has come out of the life of "we two." There is repetition, duplication. It may be that a large part of what was oneself or one's mate is *out there*, walking about, talking, thinking. This objectification is a marvel-



ous process. Traits, qualities, possibilities that have never been understood in oneself or properly related become suddenly quite clear. I myself know of nothing that has more of sheer wonder in it. And I ask myself with a certain bewilderment: What is the matter with those adolescent artists of ours that they cannot capture the wonder and make us feel it? For it seems that if we could be made to feel it; if, as a matter of our everyday thinking, we could be brought to realize that the individual who does not produce a child and live through the growing up of that child, misses the high point of living, I venture to believe that the restless wish of mature men and women to philander around would seem like the wish of a grown-up man still to be playing with toy balloons when he might be about great business.

If we are right in this, then the invitation to pass beyond the erotic level is not an invitation to humdrum, to boredom, to a kind of sour settled-downness. It is the invitation to become co-creators. It is the invitation to live on a level denied to children, denied to adolescents; a level accessible only to those who are mature enough to push out of their half-grown self-enclosedness into creative identification with another life.

### *The Dangerous Forties*

But there is something more to be said. Perhaps the top level of the sex-life has not been reached when two have thus become one. There are the dangerous forties.

What makes them dangerous? Apparently, after the "first, fine careless rapture," there often follows boredom. This is perhaps not to be wondered at. The early sex-arousals have by this time lost their novelty. The early

surprises of each discovering the other are no more. Kisses have become more or less perfunctory. The forty-year-old sits in his arm-chair and yawns—or listens to the narcotizing radio. His mate is growing fat, fatter. He has even ceased to notice that. Now he simply takes his mate for granted. The boys and girls are off to college. They have their own concerns. They absorb checks; but they are otherwise negligible.

He yawns.

“So this is life?” he asks a little bitterly. Twenty years still to live! Thirty perhaps. Tied to this humdrum.

It is then that sex-restlessness comes. To taste a little more of the real thing! To have the sparkle of champagne, not this flat village water! So the forties are dangerous.

Later married life has, then, its own higher levels to which to mount. The man and the woman who, retaining the mutuality of their love, can nevertheless pour their life—each in his special way—into a great cause or into a creative work, are inevitably finer lovers of mate and children. When the love-life grows to its ripeness, when it mounts to this level on which it identifies itself with broader human interests and relationships, the physical love on which it throve—the passionate embrace, the joy in personal endearment—does not drop off, but, rescued from the staleness which visits the love that is too narrowly domestic, it grows into a finer freshness. It is, then, apparently as needful that we *grow up in love* as that we fall in love. I cannot forbear quoting an amusing protest of my friend, John Haynes Holmes, against what seems to be the adolescent assumption of some of our modern writers:

*Lines on Reading D. H. Lawrence,  
Sherwood Anderson, et al.*

## I

Friends, what's the matter with me?

## II

I've been married eighteen years  
And still love my wife.  
I wonder what's the matter with me!

## III

Judging from these books I'm told to read,  
I ought to be tired of my wife;  
But I'm not!  
I ought to fall in love with another woman,  
With other women,  
With lots of other women;  
But I don't!  
Say, what's the matter with me? . . .

This process of revivifying our inner relationships is not a single one which we pass through in the dangerous forties; it is an ever-repeated process which may take place innumerable times. In the freshness of some fair morning, or the exaltation of some noble night, out of sorrow or great joy something takes place in us, and we mount to a still higher level of the love-life.

*Parent Fixations*

Let us turn very briefly to another type of sex-fixation which is not altogether rare in normal life. When a man

marries, we have said, he passes into a new relationship. It is one out of which a new order of life is to be created. He himself is to be one of the creators. His mate is to be a co-creator. Between them they are to bring something as yet unachieved into the world. This new thing which is to be brought into the world is not merely progeny. It is a new relationship between these two persons.

In many cases, however, marriage fails of accomplishing this mutually creative relationship. If the man has been an over-cuddled child; if he has developed something of a parent-fixation, he will unconsciously look for a mate like his mother. When he finds such a woman and marries her, she will be to him his second mother. She will be there to cuddle him, praise him, help him out of his occasional dumps, tell him when to put on his rubber shoes, wrap the muffler around his neck; she will be efficiently worrisome about his sore throats, headaches, and gastric palpitations. She will be to him, in short, all that his dear mama was. This man has not married a wife. He has married a mother-substitute.

Or if the woman has become more or less fixated on her father, petted and indulged by him, she will look for a husband like him. When she finds such a man and marries him, he will be to her a second father. He will be there to protect her, earn for her, decide for her, dominate her pleasantly, cherish her defenselessness by keeping her defenseless. He will bend down over her from a manly height. He will keep her in happy ignorance of everything save the fact that she is his dear little girl. That woman has not married a husband. She has married a father-substitute.

Sometimes it works both ways. A mother-seeker happens to marry a father-seeker. Then tragedy ensues. For how can a comfort-seeking boy, longing for a mama, effectively serve

as a strong and resourceful male for a dear little girl who is longing for a papa; and how can a defenseless little girl who is longing for a papa, do all the necessary strong-arm work for a timid little boy who wants a mama?

Marriage, apparently, means marrying a mate. However the contributions may be apportioned—and modern marriage makes possible many different ways—married life escapes the parent-child relationship only when both mates face each other as equals, each cognizant of the necessity and dignity of the other's contribution to the common enterprise, and both together creating the new relationships out of which the family life is to grow.

### *Vocational Fixation*

Let us pass now to another essential region of our life, that of vocation. Here, too, if there is not a climb from a pre-vocational level to the level of vocation there is a fixation. If the climb is happily made, and if the individual finds himself in a lifework which enlists his interests and matches his powers, he is a fortunate human being.

But frequently while there may indeed be a mounting to a vocational level, it is a forced mounting, and when the level is reached, there is nothing in the situation which tempts the individual to mount farther. He has to work; but he is not fitted, in either interest or capacity, to his job. Therefore, he may be said not really to have reached the vocational level in any adequate sense.

Through certain false views which we are happily leaving behind, girls are frequently kept altogether out of vocational life. One still meets with a few fathers who feel it an insult to themselves to have their daughters go to work; a

few mothers who regard it as an injustice to their daughters not to have full support; a few, rapidly diminishing, daughters who still hold it as their right to be maintained by their family in a kind of complete irresponsibility through all the days of watchful waiting until young Lochinvar comes out of the West. And if young Lochinvar fails to appear, these few remnants of mid-Victorian feminine frailty are content to settle down to a life-time of non-vocational futility. But happily such girls—and such fathers and mothers—are a vanishing race. The idea is becoming prevalent that all life must mount to the vocational level—if not to the vocation of wifehood and motherhood, then to vocation outside the home.

The clinician is indicating to us with increasing clarity that a great many of our difficulties arise either from a fairly complete maladjustment in vocational life—a day-time of irritations and a night-time of discontent—or from an absence of vocational functioning which leaves the individual a prey to all manner of mental troubles. It is highly important then that, vocationally, we keep happy and effectively on the upward move.

### *Fixation in the Job*

I have spoken of the vocational misfit. There is also the person who fits, but who fits far too perfectly. I remember several years ago, in an eastern factory, an occasion on which honor was paid to an old employee. He had been a worker at the identical bench, doing practically the identical routine job, for thirty-five years. The company made speeches to him, patted him on the back, told him what a priceless fellow he was, and how they loved him. It was all

very generous and kind. But the psychological angels hovering overhead must have wept. The poor fellow, for thirty-five years, had simply been in a condition of arrested development. The company should long since have warned him that if he kept it up, he would receive not an ovation, but a termination.

Such fixations within the vocational life are by no means infrequent. They occur when men are unable or unwilling to escape from blind-alley jobs. In such jobs an easy facility is gained, and with it, a false sense of self-importance. The blind-alley worker comes to feel that he owns the job, when as a matter of fact the job owns him. He finds it increasingly impossible to break away. Fear of the unknown deters him. His whole life tends, therefore, to concentrate into a kind of defensive pride in his special craftsmanship. Consequently he develops a jealousy of all that threatens his little kingdom. He becomes suspicious of innovations, in terror of possible competitors. Hugging his comfortable security, he permits his powers of alert response and of flexible adaptation to atrophy. Very quickly, he becomes an old man who "stays put."

But it is not only the blind-alley job which is responsible. Men and women of a certain calibre fixate in any job. Teachers are notoriously in danger of job-fixation. Not having the stimulus of an ever-pressing competition, and serving in a system which tends, almost inevitably, to standardize itself into rigid forms, they easily follow the path of least resistance—which is to learn how the special teaching job is done and then to keep on doing it in that identical way. Such teachers dread change. A number of years ago kindergarten was done on the Froebel plan. Then the ideas of Montessori began to be introduced. The old-line kinder-

gartners rose in their wrath, declaring the new ideas to be anathema. There may, indeed, have been much to criticize in the new methods and much that was valuable in the old. But it was not difficult to infer from the behavior of the old guard that it was very largely a case of fixated teachers defending themselves against the invasion of that which threatened the quiet security of their jobs.

The progressive ideas of John Dewey in America, of Ovide Decroly in Brussels, of the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva have met with the same kind of passionate opposition from fixated teachers, principals and school superintendents.

In business and industry, men frequently fixate at certain levels of achievement. Salesmen, for example, will settle down to contented self-congratulation when the ten thousand dollar level has been reached. Thereafter they depend on their accumulated bag of tricks. A machine worker, once secure in his job, will make no effort to rise out of the ranks. A superintendent, after awhile, will be content to go on running his factory as he has long since learned to run it.

Most housewives are already fixated on the day of their marriage. There are few jobs, apparently, that are more in need of alert response to changing conditions than housewifery. A century of mechanical invention and of new biological and psychological insight has made possible radical changes in the housewife's techniques. The woman, however, when she marries, usually places herself at the expected vocational level, and, unwilling or unable to create new conditions for herself, remains throughout her life a fixated houseworker.

Vocation occupies at least one half of our waking life. In the case of many of us it occupies two thirds or more. Some-



times it is practically all of us. If, therefore, a person becomes vocationally fixated, either in the sense that he has not grown up to a self-supporting job, or in the sense that he has stopped growing on the job he has, it is reasonable to suppose that this condition of arrested development will leave its serious mark upon the rest of his psychological life.

### *The Pattern*

The psychological pattern should now be fairly clear. Life is a mounting to successive levels. It fails just in so far as at any point that mounting is arrested. There are other types of levels than those we have discussed. There are, for example, levels to be mounted in social functioning. The child is first a sheer individualist. It is only later that he learns to play with others, and later still to work with them. How many adults are fixated on the childish social level—uncoöperative, hogging-it-all, jealous of others, tactless, stirrers-up-of-strife?

A certain type of social fixating is thus appealingly described by a young student: "I heard of a girl who at the age of seventeen was not allowed to go out with boys, as her family believed them to be dangerous specimens. They were allowed to call, but they soon dwindled away, for naturally they wanted to go out to theatres, golf, dances, etc. I think this was a social fixation, for it certainly isn't good for a person to stay with one group or sex continually. A person needs to mix with all kinds to a certain extent, to meet situations, and distinguish between the good and bad. The family of the girl could have made suggestions and given help instead of placing a barrier to her next plateau of development."

Fixating within a small group is thus described: "Mr. and Mrs. Jones have been married for about eight years, and gradually their circle has been diminishing. At first they went out to dinner at about seven of their friends' houses; now they go to concerts with the Bakers and Browns, play bridge with them, wait to see how much the Bakers and Browns are giving for the Red Cross drive and allow their children to play only with the little Bakers and Browns."

So, likewise, there are levels to be mounted in mental life. The child is first of all receptive and uncritical. He takes his world as he finds it. Also he is ignorant, and quite undisturbed by the fact of his ignorance. How many grown-ups are fixated as to their mental life, accepting their world—of politics, religion, social relationships—as they find it? How many of them are village-minded, ignorant, and often rather priding themselves upon the fact that they do not need to learn?

Frequently parents help to fixate their children. "Sometimes I feel that I am being fixated by my family mentally. For example, if we all see the same play, mother, in discussing it, instead of allowing me to explain the intrigue, unwinds the whole inner meaning before I have a chance to intercede. Or with books, all the parts between the lines are explained for me. Every morning I am told just what I had better do, when, as a matter of fact, I had had it all planned out that way. Or when I drive the car and approach the 'stop' signal, 'Hadn't you better slow down now?' or, 'Better shift into second.' It is usually just little things, but those hinder my development more than one can imagine."

There are also levels to be mounted in the æsthetic life. If we normally grow up, we develop an increasing sense of

order, a dislike of meaningless noises, an antipathy to dirt. It is obvious that in all these respects there are adults who have never grown up.

So, likewise, there are levels to be mounted in religion. The child is in the fairy-tale stage. He loves the marvelous, the miraculous. He has an undeveloped sense of cause and effect. He animates the inanimate—his teddy bear, clouds, trees, etc. Also, he is, for himself, the center of the universe. Have we, among grown-ups, fairy-tale religion, religion of miracles, religion with man as the center of the universe's concern?

Thus in all these regions—sexual, vocational, social, mental, æsthetic, religious—our life either makes its successful ascent to the next indicated level, or, fixating at a lower level, fails of its completer functioning. Some day, doubtless, we shall come to believe that the most vital task of education is not, as now appears, to indoctrinate with facts, but the far more difficult task of guiding the human being from level to level of his life-functioning. Since this mounting must go on through the mature as well as through the childhood and adolescent years, it is obvious that it will be effectively performed only as education is greatly changed. In the first place, it must be more than book-learning. It must be a training in the major life-processes. In the second place, it must cease to be the suddenly arrested thing it now is, leaving off at fourteen or sixteen or at best at twenty-one, and must become an enterprise continuous with the entire life of the individual.

We have, in this chapter, only drawn broad outlines of the picture. The reader can have an interesting time filling in the details by watching the life about him and trying to

discover the different types of fixations to be found. He will discover that they are legion. In almost any conversation, he will catch traces of mental fixations. "It was good enough for my father, and it's good enough for me." He will find furniture-fixations, doily-fixations, music-fixations, religious-service-fixations.

In his description of hystericals, Freud speaks of their "abnormal clinging to the past." They cannot let the past go, cannot healthily forget. They are fixated in reminiscence. Are there normal people like that, who are unable to move on because the past is too much with them? In fact, the reader will discover that most persons, in a good many regions of their existence, humble or otherwise, have a fairly strong disinclination to pushing ahead.

And then he will be ready for the question: Shall we push them ahead, or pull them; or shall we just let them remain fixated? The reader may thereby be led to some reflections upon why mature life thus stops dead at certain points; and he may seek to answer the difficult question how life can be kept continuously on the forward move.

## CHAPTER III

### WE BUILD UP FICTIONS

#### Projection and Introjection

A certain married woman of fifty-five was brought to the hospital for the insane. She had been annoying many prominent people with letters of complaint about her husband, her children and her doctor. When her history was finally unravelled, it ran something like this. As a girl she had had several homosexual episodes. Once she approached a friend of hers with homosexual intent and was sternly rebuked. From then on she began to make disparaging remarks about her friend, stating that the latter was jealous of her and was an immoral woman. Later, when she was married, she had several periods of great excitement in which she publicly accused her friend of trying to influence her husband and her children against her. At the age of forty-seven she became so unmanageable that she was committed to an asylum. After awhile she was released to the custody of one of her daughters; but she caused so much annoyance by her letters of accusation to prominent people that she was re-committed to an asylum.<sup>1</sup>

Let us disregard the particular sexual details of this case and note the psychological processes at work. Early in life this particular woman had had emotions which she was not free to express. There was therefore guilt-feeling

<sup>1</sup> Sands and Blanchard, *Abnormal Behavior*, p. 202.

in her; fear-feeling; the feeling of not being like others; the feeling of longing for something not permitted. Once, when the strong emotion did actually break through, she was openly rebuked by a friend—shamed. Now, we are all, first and foremost, creatures of self-defense. We fly up in arms against anything which threatens that which we must hold on to if we are to go on living—our own self-respect, our belief in ourselves. What happened, then, at this crucial moment of shaming, was a leap to self-defense. She could not bear being branded as the guilty party, even to herself. So the curious trick was performed which we find so often taking place in the emotional life: she *projected* her own guilt into the other person.

The rest of the story is clear enough. Once this projecting of her guilt into someone else began, it became the solving process in her life. It saved her own self-respect. Her life thereafter was chiefly a search for available scape-goats, with herself always the innocent and persecuted party.

### *How the Fiction is Formed*

What we are interested in here is the curious way in which a strong, repressed emotion will thus suddenly be transferred from the person himself and be built up fictionally in and around the person of someone else.

Let us take a simple example of this process as it occurs in everyday life. A wife is waiting dinner for her husband. He does not come. Already he is half an hour late. She begins to worry. What can have kept him? She goes to the window, peers anxiously up and down the street. No husband in sight. Shall she begin the dinner? But if he were not coming would he not have telephoned? . . . An-

other quarter of an hour passes. He is usually punctual. What *can* have happened to him? She begins to picture him run over by an automobile or killed in a subway crash. . . . Now he is an hour late. She must keep calm. . . . What is the *matter* with the man? She is getting angry now. Her thoughts change. He probably went off with some friends, and forgot all about the time. And she at home, waiting patiently, with the dinner getting cold! . . . Then she remembers. He has been curiously preoccupied of late. Something on his mind. What has been on his mind? Busy at the office . . . ah yes, that's what they all say. Busy with? . . . Ugly thoughts, scarce formed, flash into her mind and are suppressed; flash again. No—she tells herself firmly—that's nonsense. He's been delayed. But—he is now an hour and a half overdue—why couldn't he have telephoned? Why couldn't he have been considerate enough to have let her know? . . .

Now if at that precise moment her perfectly innocent husband turns his key in the lock, how will she meet him? There will be an immense sigh of relief, no doubt, and a rush of feeling. But curiously enough, the anger and the suspicion will have conspired to build up a kind of picture of him. When he enters she will not see *him*, the perfectly innocent husband, who has been delayed in a traffic-jam and unable to telephone her. She will see a figure built up partly out of her anger and suspicion; and for the first moments it will be to that fabricated figure that she will speak.

“John, why *couldn't* you have let me know?”

That question is addressed not to the real, innocent John, but to the John whom she has fictionally built up. Projecting her own strong emotions into John, she has made him into a guilty party even before he has had

a chance to open his lips and declare his innocence.

Let us hope that John's innocence is perfectly established and that life goes on merrily thereafter. But if the ugly suspicions are strong, even his explanations may not dispel the fiction. Even while he talks, it will not be the real John to whom she will be listening, but the fictional John of her suspicious imagining, plus the prevalent suspicion as to the behavior of husbands. This fictional John, once built up, may, in the coming days, grow to ugly dimensions. Particularly if, by chance, she has been noting her increasing age. The strong emotion which attaches itself to the fading of personal charm, combined with the strong suspicions, may build up a fiction of a husband who is growing weary of her. She cannot, of course, express her suspicions; she must keep to herself the emotions about her fading charms. She must suppress them both, hold them hidden, unshared.

Let us suppose meanwhile that John is completely innocent. He loves his wife; but he is a terribly busy man. He is preoccupied at breakfast, brooding at dinner. Several times he telephones home that he is detained. And once she catches him hastily slipping a letter back into his pocket. All these perfectly innocent occurrences take on significance. Each is invested with a meaning which tends to confirm the initial ugly thought. Until, in the end, the poor wife has built up for herself a completely coherent but utterly fictional picture of a faithless husband and an unloved wife.

### *How Parents Do It*

A boy comes in late with dirty hands and suit covered plentifully with dust. The mother is horror-stricken.



"Thomas! Late again! And just look at your new suit! Fighting, I suppose!" Now, as a matter of fact, Thomas has been at perfectly honorable employment. He has stayed at school to rehearse a new play, and scenery being required, has descended into the basement to scout around for available lumber. The lugging of lumber does not improve the condition of one's clothes. When Thomas appears in the hallway, what the mother does is to build up instantly, out of her own horrified emotions, a fictional Thomas, a guilty and disgraceful Thomas. And to that fictional Thomas she addresses herself.

We hope that in this case likewise matters will clear up. But frequently they do not. If Thomas is a sensitive youngster, and if this instant blaming has occurred with a fair degree of frequency, he may disdain to answer. He may march off to his room, while she shouts after him. Thomas will nurse his hurt feelings; she will nurse her wrath. At dinner she will lament to Father. "Thomas was late again, and he almost ruined his new suit!" Father, tired, hungry, already the recipient of similar complaints, may not stop to question and investigate. "No dessert for Thomas! And if this happens again . . . !"

Thomas, having by this time attained to the martyr-stage—a most exquisite stage to a sensitive youngster—will set his lips and take his punishment. But a glorious, soul-satisfying hate will have sprung to birth in his young soul. And out of that hate, and out of those proud, martyr-feelings, he will himself now build up fictional pictures—of a mother who is unjust; a father who is cruel; a son misunderstood, maltreated. And so the little tragedy of errors will begin to unroll itself.

Thomas may thereupon become a disdainful cynic, or a

seclusive, bitter rebel. In school, a slight repulse to his pride, and he may extend his bitter feelings to his teacher, building up similar fictions about her. Then his teacher, exasperated by his ill-behavior, may herself begin to build up fictions about him. She will call him a "bad" boy, a boy with "evil instincts," a boy who just naturally loves to make trouble. Until in the end, teacher and principal and truant officer and father and mother will stand metaphorically wringing their hands over their fictional Thomas; while Thomas, looking into their angry, puzzled faces, will damn singly and collectively the fictional selves which he has himself created.

### *Sharing the Guilt*

The foregoing examples indicate one way in which fictions are built up. There are also other ways. The individual, we have said, must inevitably defend his own opinion of himself. If, for example, he is an evildoer, it is a great comfort to him to know that others likewise are evildoers. Dividing the blame lightens the load. A cynical laugh and a "Well, I guess I'm not the only one," gives relief.

The business man who puts through a shady deal will thus project his own shadiness into others. He will assert stoutly—of course on the basis also of a good deal of observation of others—that everybody has his price. "*Do* others or they will *do* you." The man who slips up in his marital fidelity, shrugs his shoulders and projects his own infidelity into others. "It's human nature," he says. "We're all like that." Thus each of them, making the others share his guilt, gains for himself the perfect alibi.

To impute unto others what is rankling in yourself—such is the gentle art of projection.

*Persecution*

This propensity toward building fictions has frequently taken tragic forms. Let me quote the following: <sup>1</sup> "The signs of the possession appeared in the Ursuline cloister of London (1632-1639). The nuns accused a good-looking priest of the town, Urbain Grandier, of having bewitched them. The principal rôle in the epidemic is played by Madame de B., the Superior. She was a proud woman of lively intellect and marked hysterical temperament. The hallucinations began with her. During the night a phantom appeared to her in whom she recognized her deceased Father Confessor. The phantom explained to her that he had simply come to console her, and to instruct her about various matters which he had not had time for during his life. On the following night the phantom again appeared. But this time a change took place in it. She perceived suddenly a strange alteration in the person, and he spoke to her. He was no longer the person of her Father Confessor, but the visage and body of Urbain Grandier; who, changing his intentions with his countenance, spoke to her amorously and assailed her with enforced and shameless tendernesses. The sexual hallucinations of the Superior were repeated not only every night, but also infectiously. 'And the majority of the nuns, as well as other girls annoyed by evil spirits, hallucinated, that they received nightly visits from Urbain Grandier, and had carnal commerce with him. Their senses were deceived in such measure, that the accusations which they brought against the innocent priest had the appearance of absolute truth, and were well calculated to convince unprejudiced

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Paul Recher, *Études cliniques sur la grande hystérie*, p. 816 (1885). Cited by Taylor, *Readings in Abnormal Psychology and Mental Hygiene*, p. 618.

judges.' After being put to the most extreme tortures, Urbain Grandier was burned to death."

### *Snobbery, Fear and Hate*

This art of projecting our own faults into others takes an ugly form in snobbery. The newly rich join exclusive clubs and refer to others as "vulgar," "climbers," "uncultured." By loudly proclaiming their own distaste of these qualities, they can to an extent gain credence for their own refinement.

Again, if persons are over-fearful, they tend to project their fears outside themselves. The individual who finds a Bolshevik in every bush is already, for many of us, a sufficiently laughable figure. Being an intellectually timid person himself, and being usually in darkest ignorance, he is like a boy, who, shivering through a graveyard, turns headstones into ghosts, and harmless flowerpots into lurking demons.

So, also, individuals tend to project their hatreds. If one can project one's own hatred into the person one hates, so that one sees the latter as himself a hater, one's own hate is thereby justified. One can now give it full and glorious swing.

### *The Shy One*

We come now to some of the more pathetic forms which this projecting tendency takes. A shy person comes into the room. He is certain that everyone is looking at him. He sees a girl glance at him, then turn and say something to her partner. He notes an answering ironic smile, and instantly he is sure that he was himself the subject of the re-

mark. The shy person makes himself perfectly miserable by the simple process of believing that his own sense of inadequacy exists in the minds of his observers. If the shy person could become convinced that practically nothing of what he imagines ever really takes place; if he could get the wholesome feeling that no one is even so much as thinking of him, his shyness would vanish. He is, in short, the victim of his own projective imagination.

### *Parents Project Themselves*

A certain woman as a girl longed to be a great opera singer. But she married and had five children. One of them was a girl. Her poor, frustrated girlhood wish came to life again. And, although the child would have made a sturdy cook or a delightful, wholesome nurse, the mother pushed her into music, nursed the thin voice along, trying to gain through her little girl the triumphs denied to herself.

Sometimes when a man has achieved great things, he wishes to have that achievement carry on. In this case it is pride which impels. He strives to gain earthly immortality through the sacrifice of the progeny. No man, of course, consciously sacrifices his child to his ambition to live on. What he does is to resort to the old trick of building up a fiction. His strong wish to have the child be thus and so projects itself into his child until he sees the child as if he actually possessed the talent so greatly desired.

### *The Worlds We Create*

Finally, there is the type of person who is completely satisfied with himself. Also, since he has no financial or

other troubles, he is completely satisfied with the world. The world has treated him well; he returns the compliment, therefore, by pronouncing the world good.

Here on the other hand is the pessimist. The world has treated him, he thinks, most shabbily. Hence he, too, returns the compliment, by pronouncing the world a miserable failure. He may even write a book to prove how far from perfect it is. Neither sees anything save the fictional world which, out of his own strong emotions, he himself has fashioned.

"For everyone," writes Francis Bacon, ". . . has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolors the light of nature. . . . So that the spirit of man . . . is in fact a thing variable and full of perturbation, and governed as it were by chance."

"How much am I projecting *myself* into the situation?" Obviously, that is a fairly crucial question for everyone to ask. As the husband appears late for dinner; as the mother sees the small boy rush in with dirty hands and clothes; as the newly rich man talks disdainfully of the vulgar herd; as the snooper snoops for hidden enemies; as the hater hates; as the optimist gurgles and the pessimist glooms—could each but answer that question with some frank penetration, one suspects that they would come to judge their fellow-creatures less mistakenly.

### *Introjection*

In projection, as we have seen, we shape a world in the image of ourselves. There is an opposite process—introjection—in which the outside world shapes us in the image of itself.

Take the example of war hysteria. There is the type of citizen who is not swept off his feet. He holds the excited world off at arm's length. He waits, considers, tries to find out. There is the other type who is swept at once into the emotional current. He buys up all the newspapers; hangs out the flags; joins everything that can be joined; denounces the enemy; and speeds on the "boys." He is in high degree an introjective mind. A world which has itself been deluded by propaganda shapes him into its own image.

During the World War, stories of German atrocities in Belgium were circulated among the allied nations. The introjective mind was again in evidence. It lapped up these tales. A story was no sooner told than believed; no sooner believed than passed on. Until a vast delusion had built itself up, which later critical investigation, even to this day, has hardly been able to dispel.

Rumor grows through the introjective process. During the war, the English were told on apparently unimpeachable authority that train-loads of Russian soldiers were being sent through England to the front. Again the introjective mind was all there. Hundreds of thousands of English people accepted the falsity as fact. Now-a-days the standard example of the introjective process is found in the naïve assertion that Soviet Russia is sending untold sums of money to overthrow this, that and the other government. Only recently the head of one of the chapters of the American Legion was reported to have come out in a serious public statement to the effect that twenty-five millions were being sent to undermine America!

In all these cases, of course, the projective process is also at work. The citizen who has an easy vulnerability to war hysteria is himself a person filled either with timidities

or with a cheap excitement-wish. The English who swallowed the tales of the Russians being hurried through England to the front, were in a sense projecting their own wish for relief.

A typical example of the "introject" is what we call the "carbon-copy" man, the "yes" man. He takes the color of his environment. He is a faithful imitator. He is no sifter of the false from the true. Hence there is built up in him whatever system of judgments his environment happens to dictate.

Then there is the fussy person. The environment is always with him, dominates him. If there is a thread on your coat, he cannot rest until he picks it off. He will interrupt a thrilling conversation to set some trifling object straight. The outside world so overpowers him that he is not able to keep it in its subordinate place. Hence he is highly distractable—and profoundly annoying.

The introjective mind tends to be the uncritical mind. It accepts. It may be uncritical in all respects, in which case, it is the carbon-copy mind or, to change the metaphor, the mind open to every wind that blows. Or it may be uncritical in spots, as in the avid lapper-up of exciting gossip.

The opposite type, of course, is the thoroughly critical, considering mind, the mind with a sense of relative values, the mind unwilling to be rushed to conclusions, the sifting, scientific mind. Such a mind does not permit itself to be built up into the image of the world. It holds fast to the integrity of its own powers and builds itself up in the image of what it itself finds to be the truth.

The reader has been looking for regressions and fixations. Can he now catch people at this subtle trick of projecting



themselves, of coloring situations and events by their emotions? Perhaps he can catch himself at the trick and thus see more vividly how it is done. For it is a pretty trick which bears watching. If he is a husband, he might watch himself the next time he starts to upbraid his wife. Does he wait to find out precisely what the situation is; or does he leap to conclusions and assume her guilt? If she is a wife, she may review the fictional pictures she has built up when she has been "hurt" at something he has unwittingly done. If he is an employer, has he built his own resentments or his own suspicions into his workingmen? If he is a workingman, has he built his own hatreds or his own distrusts into his employer? If he is a friend, has he imputed his own shortcomings to his friend?

And then the question: How can we lessen this projecting and introjecting tendency in people? Shall we simply make clear to them what each of these processes is and does? Or must we build up other safe-guarding habits?

At any rate, we may at least carry around with us this new commandment: "Thou shalt not impute unto others what is rankling in thyself." Perhaps the reader can himself formulate a like commandment against the allurements of introjection.

## CHAPTER IV

### WE TRIP IN OUR LOGIC

#### The Seductive Art of Wish-Thinking

We have noted how we build fictions by projecting our strong emotions—fear, pride, sex—into persons and situations. The strong emotion is a *wish*. If it is fear, it is the wish to escape; if it is pride, it is the wish to appear great; if sex, it is the wish for gratification. It is these wishes of ours that are behind most of our thinking, so much so that we are justified, I believe, in coining a name for the special kind of thinking which they induce. We shall call it *wish-thinking*.

This process of wish-thinking is ordinarily called “rationalizing.” The term is unfortunate, I believe, because rationalizing still means for many persons, “using reason.” Only yesterday an intelligent person spoke to me of the great need for rationalizing our politics. It is obvious what he meant. He did *not* mean something which ought to be deplored. Besides, “rationalizing” does not accurately describe the process which we here have in mind. That process, as we have seen, is one in which the thinking *is based on a wish* rather than on the facts of the situation.

#### *We Wish-Think by Hiding*

The first type of wish-thinking to which I should like to call attention in this chapter is a curious type in which the thinking proceeds most happily by hiding something. Take

the simple case of a person voluntarily enlisting for war. I do not mean for a moment to say that the following is a description which applies to all such persons. But I am sure the reader will agree that the reaction is typical. Ask this person why he is enlisting. His cheek will flush with a kind of pride; his eyes will brighten; he will stand up a little straighter. "I feel that every man should do his duty," he will answer.

And he will not be lying—unless hiding something and not being aware that one is hiding it is to be called lying. But obviously his statement does not tell the whole truth. The man has here selected one of his many motives, the one, in short, which he is sure will win your approval. Certainly it is the one which wins his own best approval. And he has conveniently forgotten the rest.

But the rest of the motives are there. We mean to imply no disesteem of this person, but we suspect that at the time of enlisting there were all kinds of vague thrills cavorting through his consciousness: the excitement of leaving his humdrum job; the zest of going off with the boys; his pride in a uniform; the praise of his friends; the admiring eyes of his best girl; being the center of attention in his small circle; the prospect of tearing loose a little; the fear of being called a slacker; the chance to strut. If, now, the reader should approach this young man and tell him that his chest-filling patriotism was only a kind of window-dressing which his self-respect was displaying, while back in the store there were motives of which he would doubtless be ashamed, the young man might grow angry. But that would simply mean that his wish-thinking was running true to form. As a matter of fact he does wish a number of the things above mentioned; but he dares not go about

among his friends blurting them out. He must not even acknowledge them to himself. Why? Because his chief wish is to be admired. That is why young men like this one, during the war and after, were always hotly angry when their "motives" were questioned. Their wish-thinking refused to have their deeper and oftentimes stronger motivation dragged into the light.

Nothing of this is altogether discreditable to these young men. They were doing what we all do, presenting their best front to the world. Only, one suspects, if they could frankly and humorously have exposed the medley of motives which drew them to their adventure, it might have made the whole war-project a good deal less solemnly self-righteous. They would then have gone far more as the bored victims of peace and less as the knights of high moral emprise. That might at least have rid us of a good deal of pompous speechifying by the stay-at-homes. Also, it might have considerably shortened the war. And it would have been a good thing for those people to remember who were later to talk about "the next war."

Or take another example. Here is a person who goes into politics. Why? For the good of his community, of course. But again, one suspects. A wish for self-display? A wish for mastery? A wish to compensate for mental inferiorities? A wish for the excitement of public life? A strongly sexed nature seeking sublimation through the mastery of the mob?

Obviously, we cannot take a person's say-so for his motives. He cannot even take his own say-so. But we may be sure that whatever the motive is which is publicly displayed, it will be complimentary to himself and will make no mention whatever of anything that is in any way uncomplimentary.

The reader may be feeling that this kind of analysis goes too far. Are we to accept no motives as completely pure? And are we then to be cynical about everybody? Hardly that. One who has looked upon human motivation, however, begins to understand that it is far more complicated, far more devious and hidden than appears on the surface. Having done so, he will be less puffed up about himself. If he has ever thanked God that he is not as these others, he will take a reef in his smugness. For, once he has pursued motivation to its hidden corners, he will suspect that his righteousness may simply be his own pet way of so dressing his particular window that they who pass by will stop, look, and admire, and be prevented from noticing what lies hidden farther back in his mental and emotional shop.

### *No Admittance*

We pass now to another trick of wish-thinking. It is the habit of saying "No Admittance" to ideas we do not like. For example, people who have become prosperous dislike to be reminded of any misery in the world; it hurts their feelings, disturbs their enjoyment. Hence the thought of it is resolutely refused entrance; and if by chance they are reminded that nevertheless the misery is there, they shrug their shoulders or hotly declare that it is only the talk of agitators and social sentimentalists. "No Admittance."

When a war is on, only the victories are fully reported. Defeats are minimized, lied about, often left unmentioned. All this is done to "keep up the morale." War, in other words, is so unnatural a human enterprise that the only way in which the combatants can be kept at their slaughter is to go on lying to them about themselves and each other.

Truth must not be permitted to enter, since truth is unsettling. Again, "No Admittance."

The same thing happens among those who hold a religious faith. The sceptic is a terrible creature to the believer. Not on any account is he to be admitted to the councils of the faithful, because he may introduce that which will work havoc to the secure peace of the already-persuaded.

Debate, in its academic form, is an outstanding example of wish-thinking by "No Admittance." The chief wish of the young debater in his interscholastic debate is to win. Hence he must train himself deliberately to brush out of existence everything of significance which his opponent says. If he permits even a single fact stated by the other side to take possession of him or of the audience, he is lost. So, although he has ears to hear, he must not hear; although he has a mind to comprehend and become convinced, he must blot out whatever threatens the security of his own position.

It is significant of the profound ignorance which prevails in schools and colleges about this matter that debate, which is one of the most devastating forms of wish-thinking, is still highly respected as a salutary form of "intellectual exercise." There may be a type of debate, of course, in which an honest effort is made to present both sides of a case, and in which both speakers and audience are prepared to modify their views as the debate proceeds. It is a form, however, unfortunately all too rare.

### *Giving Defeat the Semblance of Victory*

And now for another trick of wish-thinking. We have already noticed how persistent in us is the wish to defend

ourselves in our own eyes. We cannot admit that we are really defeated. A woman passionately loves a man, but is repulsed by him. She ends by hating him. Is not her hate a balm to her own wounded self-respect? Royal ladies used to go further. They would put the unappreciative young man to death, giving defeat the semblance of victory. The real reason, of course, was not that the young man deserved death, but that the royal lady had been humiliated. She could not publish her humiliation abroad. A queen repulsed? Unthinkable. So she worked herself up to such a frenzy of hatred that she could actually believe the unresponsive young man deserved death.

"There have been cases," writes Taylor, "of women converted to Christian Science because of a defense hatred for medical men."<sup>1</sup> But to join a religion because of hatred? Impossible to publish such an admission. Hence that motive is left unexpressed and the love of the religion is set forth as the sole and compelling motive.

Dr. Frink writes:<sup>2</sup> "One young man whose fiancée's parents suddenly lost their money, announced his intention to marry her at once 'to provide for her.' Analysis showed that this was really a defense against popular suspicion that his real devotion was to her money—which it was." Was there here the heroic gesture?

### *Defending Our Weaknesses*

A lazy executive is sitting at his desk. A subordinate enters, a sheaf of papers in his hand. He outlines a care-

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, W. S., *Readings in Abnormal Psychology and Mental Hygiene*, p. 630.

<sup>2</sup> Frink, H. W., *Morbid Fears and Compulsions*, p. 178. (Quoted by Taylor.)

fully elaborated plan which will require of the executive that he rouse himself and take action, perhaps a good deal of action. The executive puts on a profound air, purses up his lips, looks at the ceiling with penetrating gaze, then trains his ponderous face on the subordinate.

"Fine, Marston," he says, "fine! You've done an excellent piece of work. Let me have a copy of this report to look over. It's a big subject, and I'll have to give it my most careful thought. Just now I doubt whether the time is ripe. Maybe later. But with a thing like this, you have to go slowly. Never safe to rush a thing. Look before you leap. However, I'm going to give it my most careful thought." And thereafter nothing whatever happens.

The real reason behind this inaction, of course, is laziness—which does little honor to its possessor and which he dare not express. The published reason does him high honor. Both in his own eyes and in the eyes of his associates, it marks him as a man of thought and caution.

Dr. Yoakum writes of the case of a student who came back to the placement office thoroughly discouraged. "He had been out on a search for a job at the close of his college career. At one place he talked to the vice president. The vice president permitted him to fill out an application blank. After the boy had filled it out and handed it in, the vice president said rather positively, 'Well it may be a good thing for you to go to college, but you must remember it takes a long time to learn a business, and you, like the rest of us, will need to start at the bottom. It is much better to go through high school, then enter business and learn it in all its details. You have wasted your time, so far as getting into business is concerned.' The boy found



out later that the method described by the vice president happened to be a bit of personal history."

In this case the profound wish of the man was to keep his own sense of superiority. He saw it threatened by a college youth. He could not say to him: "Young man, I have had no college education, and I therefore feel inferior to you." So he built up a philosophy of business-preparation to defend his own wish to be the superior. He made himself believe—because he wanted to—that his own probably inferior way was the superior one.

What shall we call this particular trick? "Defending our own weaknesses against invasion?" Perhaps the reader can find an apt descriptive phrase.

### *Wish-Thinking and Insanity*

Such is wish-thinking. A few steps more and we are in the realm of insane delusions. "If we now turn again to the sphere of the abnormal," writes Dr. Bernard Hart, "we shall find that the mechanism of rationalization plays a very prominent part. The patient who possesses a delusion neglects as far as possible the facts that are incompatible with his belief, but if he is compelled to take them into account, he rationalizes them in such a way that their natural significance is effectually concealed. Thus, the lunatic who is firmly convinced that his wife is seeking to murder him, will distort the meaning of everything which happens until it is brought into harmony with his dominating delusion, and capable of being used as a pseudo-logical proof. If his wife is solicitous for his welfare, her behavior is regarded as a cloak to conceal her real design; if she treats him badly, the evil intentions are clear; if she gives him food

it is obvious that she proposes to poison him; if she does not, it is equally obvious that she hopes to undermine his health by withholding the necessaries of life. If we argue with him and point out that his belief is inconsistent with the facts, he smiles contemptuously at our credulity, or is perhaps suspicious that we are the paid accomplices of his wife." <sup>1</sup>

Our social and political life is so full of these pseudo-systems built up out of our strong wishes—fear, suspicion, hatred, ambition—that it seems as if only the most shadowy line can be drawn between the delusions of insanity and the biased and opinionated wish-thoughts of sanity.

### *The Issue*

The advance of civilization has meant the gradual extension of the area of fact-thinking. The invention of the first tool was the initial triumph of such thinking. A tool cannot be dreamed or prayed or wished into existence. The tool-maker had to grapple with the tough conditions of reality. He had to meet them with honesty and efficiency. He could neither evade them nor fabricate them. It is for this reason that tool-making all through the ages—the molding of matter into usable shape—has been one of the most effective means whereby man has disciplined himself into straight and honest thinking.

Then came the invention of mathematics as the second triumph of fact-thinking. After mathematics, guesswork in one large region of life was over. One might dearly love to have five plus five equal twelve; but all the loves and wishes in the world were unable to add one digit to the in-

<sup>1</sup> Hart, B., *Insanity*, p. 86.

evitable ten. Mathematics was stern discipline. It was unyielding. It permitted no sentimental relapses, no ecstatic flights into wishful fancy.

Then came the severe logic of Socrates. To know precisely *what* you were talking about. To be able to *define*—with singleness of meaning, free of ambiguity, so that there might be no lost motions, no talking at cross purposes, no fooling of oneself into the belief that one's musty inconsistencies were clear truth. Socrates died for fact-thinking.

Then Plato. To be able to see the permanent in the shifting, the one in the many. Not to be whirled about by a thousand confusing experiences. All science, since Plato, has been engaged in finding *law*. And that, too, has been a stern discipline in fact-thinking. Newton's law of gravitation could not be wished into existence. Nor could anyone simply wish it out of existence. Whatever the law, it was accessible only to those who, surrendering their private biases, could place themselves wholly and devotedly at the service of observable facts.

Then Aristotle with his relentless syllogism. It did not accomplish all that was fondly expected of it. It was a tool only of analysis, not of discovery. But as a tool of analysis it was surgical in its keenness. No emotional undistributed middle could escape its searching edge; no wishful illicit major or minor; no *non sequitur*; no *argumentum ad hominem*; no reasoning in a circle. Fact-thinking—rigorous, unbendable.

And finally, the laboratory techniques of science. Putting the opinion, the hypothesis to the test of experiment. Trying it out in the open. Doing it over and over again, so that no pertinent fact might be omitted; so that others could do it also. And, if unsuccessful, calmly discarding the

hypothesis and working away at another. Fact-thinking—hard, rigorous, honest-minded.

The triumph of humanity has lain there. Its continued triumph will lie in the extension of the area already conquered for fact-thinking.

Over against fact-thinking there is wish-thinking—the thinking which, in its mild form is self-deception and evasion; in its extreme form, insanity. Obviously, one of the next great conquests to be made in this human enterprise of ours is the extension of the area of fact-thinking into the region of our emotional life. If our emotions, as we have abundantly seen, now swing our reason into line, somehow there must be the rigor of training which will enable our reason to swing our emotions into line.

How is that to be done? The answer is: in precisely the same way that we have done it with mathematics and logic and the technique of science: by teaching. We do not hide mathematics from children. We not only teach our children that two plus two equals four, but we give them the opportunity to check up continuously on this knowledge. So, too, we quickly induct them into the defining process, in order that they may early learn how to use meanings in ways that are accurate. So, likewise, we train them in the art of making true deductions from premises; and we practice them in the rigorous techniques of observation and experiment.

Now we must teach this one thing more. It is only in recent years that psychology has made us familiar with the peculiar pseudo-logic employed by wish-thinking. We now know enough about that pseudo-logic, however, to be able to point out and avoid its misleading processes in somewhat the same manner that we can point out and learn to avoid mistakes in arithmetic or grammar or science.

In another volume <sup>1</sup> I have indicated, in a measure, how this may be done. It would take us too far afield to go into the details here. In this place I wish simply to propose to the reader that making people—from childhood up—*aware of the pseudo-logic of wish-thinking* must be our next step in the education of the race, if, indeed, our civilization is to advance toward full and triumphant fact-thinking.

If the issue is as important as it seems, how can we go about this next step? Does the foregoing analysis of wish-thinking clarify matters? Would the introduction of such analysis into our educational system help?

We have spoken of wish-thinking by hiding motives; by "No Admittance"; by turning defeat into the semblance of victory; and by defending our weaknesses against invasion. Doubtless there are many more forms which the reader can discover.

If the reader is interested, there is hardly a more illuminating way in which to begin a study of the human thought-processes than to watch for every possible trace of the kind of thinking which is animated by wish instead of by devotion to the facts.

<sup>1</sup> *Influencing Human Behavior*. See the chapter on *The Problem of Straight Thinking*.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EGO INFLATES

#### A Study of Microparanoia

That the reader will find any traces of himself in this chapter, I very much doubt; for the fact that he has been willing, with due humility, to plough through one chapter after another of this book, is fair indication that he does not belong among the curious personalities we now wish to describe. But he will recognize the symptoms. And he may perhaps discover a convenient name for some of his troublesome friends.

Let us start first with our abnormal case, a case of pronounced paranoia. What is particularly striking about it is the gradualness of the malady's onset. As the reader will note, the patient, in his boyhood—when the symptoms might already have been discovered and perhaps controlled—was hardly different from most lads. A little more conceited, perhaps, more self-assertive, more freakish, but otherwise just a boy. It is this, I think, which gives this case, and cases like it, particular significance for parents and teachers.

"L. was a bright boy, always conceited and given to non-social acts. Thus he never would play with the other boys unless he were given the leading rôle, and he could not bear to have others praised or to praise them. . . .

"He entered the medical school, and to this day there is none of his classmates who has forgotten him. Proud, even haughty, with only one or two intimates, he studied hard and did very good work. Now and then he astonished the class by taking direct issue with some professor, disputing a theory or a fact with the air of an authority and proposing some other idea, logically developed but foolishly based. . . . There were better men in his class, and they received the honors. L. was deeply offended at this and claimed to his own friends that the professors were down on him. . . .

"L. obtained a hospital place in a small city and did very good work, and though his peculiarities were noticed they excited only a hidden current of amused criticism, while his abilities aroused a good deal of praise. Stimulated by this, he started practice in the same city as a surgeon and quickly rose to the leading position. His indefatigable industry, his absolute self-confidence and his skill gave him prestige almost at once. His conceit rose to the highest degree, and his mannerisms commenced to become offensive to others. He came into collision with the local medical society because he openly criticized the older men in practice as ignoramuses, asses, charlatans, etc., and indeed was sued by one of them in the courts. . . .

"From this on his career turned. In order to contest the case, and because he began to believe that the courts and lawyers were in league against him, he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He had meanwhile married a rich woman who was wholly taken in by his keen logical exposition of his 'wrongs,' his imposing manner of speech and action. . . .

"As soon as he could appear before the bar he did so in his own behalf, for this case had now reached the proportions where it had spread out into half a dozen cases. He refused to pay his lawyers, and they sued. One of them dropped the statement that L. was 'crazy,' and he brought a suit against the lawyer. Moreover, he began to believe, because of the adverse judgments, that the courts were against him, and he wrote article after article in the radical journals on the corruptness of the courts and entered a strenuous

campaign to provide for the public election and recall of judges. . . .

"He attacked the courts boldly; openly and publicly accused the judges of corruption, said they were in conspiracy with the bar and the medical societies to do him up, added to this list of his enemies the Irish and the Catholic Church, . . . and then turned against his wife because she now began to doubt his sanity. He brought suits in every superior court in the State, and at the time that he was committed to an Insane Hospital he had forty trials on, had innumerable manuscripts of his contemplated reforms. . . . He accused his wife of infidelity, felt that he was being followed by spies and police, claimed that dictographs were installed everywhere to spy on him and had a classical delusional state. He was committed, but later he escaped from the hospital and is now at large. The State officials are making no effort to find him, mainly because they are glad to get rid of him."<sup>1</sup>

If we analyze this case, we find, most conspicuously, a drive toward *ego-maximation*. As a child the boy refused to play anything save the leading rôle. He resented not being praised above the others. Naturally, such a wish "to be the whole works" threw him out of gear with his companions. As a result, he developed two anti-social traits: (1) seclusiveness—he "would not play"; (2) contentiousness. There remained for him, then, only one way of gaining the triumph which his ego-craving demanded: he had to show people what he could do. So (3) he became furiously ambitious. When, now, his ambition was balked, his conceit would not permit him to impute the fault to himself. So (4) he developed the conviction that he was wronged.

<sup>1</sup> Myerson, A., *Foundations of Personality*, p. 365. The reader will find this book a valuable source of case material for normal life.



*Passing to the Normal*

Let us note these symptoms in normal life, first, in their slight beginnings in childhood. Here is a boy of nine. He is always vociferously right. If he appears to be wrong, it is someone else's fault. Either the teacher made a mistake, or the proper directions were not given, or there was some other slip-up. He is very loud in voicing his opinions and very contemptuous of the opinions of others. As a matter of fact, he does many things very poorly and is heartily disliked by his classmates.

Here, again, is a girl of eight who is overbearing in her play. Gradually, because of her domineering attitude and her wish to be everything herself, she has ostracized herself from the group. But she has been able to gather a few submissive satellites about her with whom she has formed an exclusive club. She makes disparaging remarks about others, carries tales about them, surrounds herself and her satellites with an air of great secrecy and importance.

When a child continually shows the symptom of self-excusing, when he fails to see himself as the one at fault and is always imputing the fault to someone else, his case needs attention, for such symptoms, if permitted to grow, may develop into delusions of self-righteousness and of persecution which may later make him an intolerable personality.

The trouble with both children here described—and it is a typical trouble—is that they are not solving their real life-problem, which is to learn to live together with their mates. Unless they learn to solve it in childhood, they may never learn to do so. Living together means adjusting themselves to others, in giving something as well as demanding

something. To withdraw, to be seclusive, to be haughtily superior, simply shelves the problem. The typical characteristics of paranoiacs is that they, too, never adjust themselves. They are invariably "against." They are in the right, the others in the wrong. That is why paranoiacs are so constantly in the law courts, seeking to have judgment issued against some other party.

The symptoms of what I shall venture to call *microparanoia*, then, or paranoia-in-the-little, are (1) an egotism unjustified by real achievement; (2) an unwillingness to take blame upon oneself; (3) an attitude of contentiousness; (4) a tendency towards unsocial behavior. Where we find one or all of these traits, it is time to be alert to danger.

#### *The Microparanoiac Grows Up*

The case of R.—likewise in normal life—is that of a boy brought up in fear of his father and under the domination of a tyrannical sister. The father himself, too lazy or too timid to face the world, lived on a small income in abject fear of its loss. The boy was alternately punished and pampered, so that he grew up evasive, tricky, sharp on a bargain, trusting no one. When, as a young man, he went into business, he looked upon his customers as people who were trying to get something from him. He developed the habit of going to law for the slightest provocation. Meanwhile, one of his chief occupations was that of securing money from his father by sly indirection. He finally became involved in a big real estate deal which tied up all his money and most of his father's. The war came, and hearing that men in service could not be forced financially, he

enlisted and became a mad enthusiast over patriotism.

Upon his discharge, however, he again took up his lawsuits, which were many. The man married a woman who for years was under the delusion that he was a victim of circumstances, and she gave her loyal support. More and more he piled up financial and other burdens upon her until she broke down. Forced to see the kind of mind for which she was struggling to no avail, she refused to go on. He turned on her, cast reflections upon her character, and finally went back to his sister, with whom he had fought for years. This man is dogmatic, opinionated, a tale-bearer, filled always with dark suspicions. And yet he goes about carrying an air of deep religious piety.

Here we have most of the typical mental processes exposed. An over-dominated child fighting for a place in the sun; the only methods open to him, trickiness and evasion. An alternately mistreated and over-indulged child, in whom there is developed no calm continuity of habit, no secure sense of kindly justice. A child infected by the domestic atmosphere of timidity and of a shrinking from wholesome human contacts; conditioned therefor in his early life to suspicion of the world and a fear of the people in it. When the child grows up, he becomes an adult unable to make the wholesome adjustments with his friends and customers which healthy life demands. He therefore falls into contention. His life becomes one long effort to beat the other fellow. Finally, when disguises begin to be penetrated by his wife, when he begins to find *himself* blamed, he flees to his last desperate defense: *he*, of course, is blameless; *she*, therefore, must be the guilty party. And so the miserable tragedy drags itself to a miserable close.

*The Business Executive*

Nor is the microparanoiac unknown in business. In a searching article on "The Psychopathology of Business," Carl Dreher<sup>1</sup> points out two types of executive, the healthy, achieving kind, and the pathological, non-achieving, kind. He describes, among others, the case of a department head, a chemist of ability and experience. This department head made a practice of "raising hell as a disciplinary device. When mistakes were made, after placing the blame to his own satisfaction, he would invariably denounce the culprit in violent and threatening terms. . . . When the mistake was clearly his, he would take refuge in a dignified silence."

He had a way of seizing credit, whenever he possibly could, for the inventions originated by his staff. His men detested him, and left as soon as they could get jobs elsewhere. "Yet the man was a tolerably good husband and father, a competent technician, morbidly conscientious and diligent in devotion to routine. His department ran, but it could have run better. . . . On one occasion he bewailed the fact that his subordinates disliked him, but he ascribed it to some obscure cussedness of mankind, which resented order, decorum, and expert direction."

Here again we have the self-maximation of the typical microparanoiac. He must himself be the "whole show." Fearing that he may be dethroned, he blusters and threatens. But he is himself never in the wrong. If things go badly, if he is heartily hated, he places the blame on someone else; or if there is no particular person at hand to bear the burden of the blame, he lays it on the general cussed-

<sup>1</sup> *The American Mercury*, April, 1925; vol. iv, No. 16, p. 412.

ness of mankind. And he *believes* all this. He *is* a deeply wronged man. He can be almost tearful about the wickedness of the world around him. To such ends can human self-deception go!

*On the Imperial Throne*

When the paranoiac is safely taken care of in the asylum, he becomes for us a harmless lunatic. Not so the microparanoiac. He is at large—often dangerously so. In fact he may sit upon an emperor's throne and work devastation in a world that has not found him out. Emil Ludwig has recently written an account of the life of William Hohenzollern which presents that ill-fated royal neurotic in the light of an outstanding microparanoiac.

It must be remembered that the unbalance of even the full-fledged paranoiac is sometimes hard to detect, because he is able to formulate his delusions of self-importance and of persecution with an appealing show of reason. This was true of William Hohenzollern. He built up a picture of a grandiose Germany and gave such an apparently authentic account of a circle of watchful foes ready to pounce upon him and the land of his delusions that he induced not only his army but his millionfold citizenry to believe him. We know now—a few of the wiser heads knew then—that he was largely persecution-mad. A crippled child, scorned by his parents, apparently doomed to the discard, he made incredible efforts to spite his destiny and become a superman. A powerful will grown to manhood, avid of glory, surrounded by sycophants who kept him from wholesome contact with reality, who played upon his overweening conceit and confirmed him in his persecutorial manias, he became the tragic figure of an emperor marshalling a na-

tion to support his delusions of a world in league against his innocence.

"Perhaps he was guiltless before God," writes Ludwig, "though not before men. After all, could he jump over his shadow? Nature, in mutilating him, had driven him to uneasy bluffing. . . . Was he to blame? Was it he who deranged the nerves which in their febrile restlessness were ever urging him to fresh antics? He who was averse to war in every form incessantly gave others reason to prepare for war. . . . The security of the German Empire fell a victim to the Emperor's nervous temperament."

"Never," continues Ludwig, "did conviction of a single error come to this man. What he saw around him, he interpreted as the rancor of an evil world, as the envy of kindred Houses, the rivalry of cabaling dynasties. . . . William the Second felt that he was encompassed by enmity; and this consciousness could have no other reaction in him, than to strengthen his convictions that he had done all he could and had but dashed himself against a hostile world."

Ludwig lays the blame upon those "febrile nerves." But those febrile nerves belonged to a child who might have been loved by his parents instead of being scorned; who might have been encouraged to up-building, creative pursuits instead of to the swaggering, destructive, false pursuits of military glory. Neither God, nor History, nor Nature was to blame for this tragic figure. The blame points straight to his parents and to that insolent system of royal etiquette which dared to take a human creature and hold him aloof and apart from the healing contacts of his fellow-men. We have, then, one more instance of the powerful part played by child-nurture in the development of an unwholesome and mischief-breeding ego-inflation.

*The Roots of the Trouble*

The significant point in all this is, as we have seen, that the paranoiac and the microparanoiac get their satisfaction, their ego-maximation, not through achieving, but through their emotions which are, in short, substitutes for achievement. In ordinary life we notice this in the fault-finding husband, who maximates his ego and gets a prodigious amount of satisfaction by finding his wife constantly in the wrong; we notice it in the semi-invalid wife, the everlasting sympathy-seeker who demands attention and achieves satisfaction by making a nuisance of herself. We notice it in the person who whines that no one understands him; in the wife, or the husband, who complains that marriage is a prison and who feverishly tries to find some outlet for his or her inflated self-esteem. We find it in the over-sensitive person who is always hearing unkind things said about himself, things that are deliberately insulting or are dark with implication. We find it in the self-excuser, who is constantly blaming circumstances. And we discover it, finally, in the man of the martyr type, who is so proud of his suffering that he actually makes occasions for getting himself crucified.

*What Can We Do About It?*

"Invariably," writes Bleuler, "we see at the root of the disease a situation to which the patients are not equal." Here, apparently, we find the explanation. The most important safeguard against the onset of this subtle disease is, first of all, to teach the young life *not to avoid difficulties*. When the child begins to become seclusive, or to go off into

prolonged sulks, or to build up elaborate excuses for himself, we may be certain that he is facing away from the reality and building up a compensatory world of fictional satisfaction. He must learn early in life to overcome difficulties, one after another. Obviously these difficulties must be just within his powers. To confront him with difficulties beyond his powers is to invite in him a tendency to evade the solution of the problems and to excuse his failures by elaborating plausible reasons. Once, however, a child learns to *achieve*, he gets the fun of the thing; and once he gets that fun, he is saved from the unhappy fate of trying to bolster up his ego-desire by inventing pitiful, grandiose fictions about himself.

But if one is already grown up and has for many years gone the microparanoiad way, what then? The trouble with the adult of this type is that he has excused himself so long he has come to believe in his excuses. He does not know that he is paranoid in character. He is, to himself, simply a poor, abused creature. But if the microparanoiac could, by a happy chance, get a straight look at himself and really detect his own fabrications, he too could save himself. He could at least stop making excuses. He could face himself squarely and take stock of himself. He could ask his friends to take stock of him. And after the necessary deflation, he could go ahead and do the thing his real powers indicated. He might even develop the sense of humor to recite Emily Dickinson's self-renovating lines:

"I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody too?  
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!  
They'd be against us, you know.



“How dreary to be Somebody!  
How public, like a frog,  
To tell your name the live-long day  
To an admiring bog!”

We warned the reader that he probably would not find himself in this chapter. But can he now do a good deed? Can he watch for those early conceits, those self-excusings, those self-pityings, those efforts to build up self-esteem by boasting, or bitterness, or whining, or haughty seclusiveness which mark the microparanoiac? He may thereby help to steer young life in the direction of wholesomely objective achievement and away from unwholesomely fictional achievement.

It should not be difficult for us to find the microparanoiac in almost any class-room, in many homes, perhaps also in the seats of the learned or the mighty. Surely the professor who declaims bitterly that he was the first to discover, etc., and that his colleagues are charlatans; the business executive who is forever quarreling with his associates and telling his friends how those same associates are trying to oust him; the young man of mediocre talents who talks mysteriously of the great book he is writing, which will some day astonish the world, all look suspiciously like our specimen.

And then the reader will no doubt ask himself the very vital question: if one catches the specimen young, what should be done? If one catches him old, what can be done?

## CHAPTER VI

### WE FLY INTO DISEASE

#### Hystericals in Normal Life

No one really wants a disease. That seems certain enough. So certain, indeed, that medicine formerly proceeded wholly upon that assumption. A patient, for example, has a paralyzed limb. The physician looked solemnly at the limb (scarcely at the man), pricked it, kneaded it, raised it and lowered it, and then, with a knowing profundity, ordered prolonged electric treatment. Again, a man has an abdominal pain-area. Once more, the physician, not thinking of the man as a whole, thumped the area, measured it, sounded it, and finally prescribed an operation for abdominal tumor. The assumption, in each case, was that, since nobody wishes to have a disease, a disease must be something which "hits" the patient, comes to him, as it were, quite independently of his will or wish.

We know better now, largely because Charcot, Breuer, Freud, Janet and the rest have opened up to us some puzzling peculiarities of the human mind. We now know that certain persons, under certain circumstances, *wish* disease. And wishing it, they get it—or at least come so near the semblance of it that it is hard to make distinctions. But also we know that they who thus wish disease are almost always quite unaware of the fact that they do wish it.

It is a curious puzzle, the unravelling of which has done

much to open the eyes of physicians to a profounder causation of disease. It has opened the eyes of students of human nature to the shifts to which man will resort in the effort to achieve his will. "One of the greatest difficulties in the medical art," writes Janet,<sup>1</sup> "and one of the greatest misfortunes of patients is that hysterical diseases are . . . uncommonly similar to all kinds of medical or surgical affections, for which they are easily mistaken. Contractures, paralyzes, anesthasias, various pains, especially when they are seated in the viscera, may simulate anything; and then you have the legion of false tuberculosis of the lungs, of false tumors of the stomach, of false intestinal obstructions, and above all, of false uterine and ovarian tumors. What happens as to the viscera also exists as to the limbs and the organs of the senses. Some hysterical disturbances are mistaken for lesions of the bones, of the rachis, for muscular and tendinous lesions. Then the physician interposes, frightens the family, agitates the patient to the utmost, and prescribes extraordinary diets, perturbing the life and exhausting the strength of the sick person. Finally, the surgeon is called in. Do not try to count the number of arms cut off, of muscles of the neck incised for cricks, or bones broken for mere cramp, of bellies cut open for phantom tumors, and especially of women made barren for pretended ovarian tumors. Humanity ought indeed to do homage to Charcot for having prevented a greater depopulation. These things have no doubt decreased, but they are still done every day. Not long ago I saw a patient who had had an eye excised and the optic nerve cut out for mere neuropathic pains. If I could only, by calling your attention and interest to the knowledge of this disease, contribute to diminish the

<sup>1</sup> *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, p. 11.

number of these medical crimes, I should already have attained a very important result."

What the psycho-physician has discovered in such cases as the above is the curious phenomenon called *conversion*. We now know that a strong feeling which, for one reason or another, must be kept rigorously hidden, will often find expression by *converting* itself into some other form, a substitute for the direct expression. One of these indirect forms of expression, for example, according to Freud, is the dream. A dream, he points out, is not just an irrelevant, accidental bit of confused consciousness. It has a reason. It expresses something. Suppose you have long wished to escape the domination of your father; or suppose that this very afternoon, seeing your aunt whom you detest, you wish to tell her what an intolerable creature she is; or suppose that you have a secret passion for the wife of your brother. You cannot possibly express any one of these strong emotions, much as you would like to. But the emotion has, so to speak, a will of its own. It does not simply fade into nothingness. You will have a dream, let us say, with all sorts of queer happenings in it. Perhaps you will even tell the dream to the father you fear or the aunt you detest, never for the moment realizing that the dream was a disguised, indirect way of expressing what you dared not express literally and directly. Whatever we may think of the exclusively sexual interpretations of Freud, I think we shall have to agree that he is right to this extent: dreams are not pure accidents; they are, in many, if not in all cases, *substitute forms of expression* for strong, unexpressed emotions of the waking life. They are, in other words, emotions *converted* into other forms.

There are scores of other ways in which our affective life

expresses itself in this substitutional or indirect manner. The reader can have an exceedingly interesting time watching for them—slips of the tongue, tilt of the head, pressure of the hand, carriage of the body, personal mannerisms of all kinds. Each of these is, in one way or another, an indirect or substitutional expression for some more or less strong feeling.

And so we come to what is more particularly the concern of this chapter. *Disease symptoms are in many cases simply substitutes for strong suppressed emotions.* Such are the paralyzes, convulsions, anesthasias mentioned above by Janet. But what is most significant of all is that, exactly as in the case of the dreamer, the purport or meaning of the symptoms is not recognized by the patient himself. In other words, the patient is in complete ignorance of the fact that his disease is his own curiously indirect way of gratifying a strong emotion which cannot be gratified directly. He dares not, in short, realize that he himself has, in a sense, willed his own disease.

### *The Picture*

In our first chapter, we presented a case of such a self-willed disease. As we there suspected, the young Australian soldier wanted to regress to the infantile so that he could escape the dangers of the front. And yet he seems to have been quite unconscious of the fact that he did wish this way of escape.

There is the case of a sailor who, having suddenly sighted a submarine, finds himself stricken blind.<sup>1</sup> Since he is blind, he cannot, of course, be expected to stand to his gun; he

<sup>1</sup> Hadfield, J. A., *Psychology and Morals*, p. 32.

must be relieved. This again, is a wished-disease. But is the sailor consciously shamming? There seems every reason to believe that no deliberate or conscious act could bring on a blindness of this sort, not to speak of countless other illnesses which have so incapacitated that the patients could hardly be regarded as happy. Something deeper than the conscious will seems in each case to have been at work to help the patient to his escape.

Again, there is the case of a man who has been injured in a railway accident. He is suing the company for damages. The trial drags on for months, being successively appealed by the lawyers. During that period the man really shows all the symptoms of severe injury. He is not shamming. Once the case is settled, however, and the money paid him, his illness begins to clear up.

Clearly there are two fundamental emotions at the root of these curious phenomena: (1) avoidance-emotions; (2) desire-emotions. The soldier and the sailor were dominated by fear. They wished to avoid something. The litigant, on the other hand, desired to get something. Whether they wished to avoid or to obtain, no one of them dared say openly what his strong wish was. Hence, as we have indicated, the wish, being of necessity repressed, converted itself into one or another of the appropriate symptoms.

### *In Normal Life*

Let us pass now to normal life. The type of avoidance-reaction is illustrated by Muriel T. As a young girl, Muriel was the well-known "sweet little thing," with hosts of men friends who liked her prettiness and who were made to feel

masculine by her charming display of feminine helplessness. She had learned the art of making her friends gratefully fetch and carry. Her mother adored her, followed after her like a loving slave. Muriel would arise from a slight illness. She would take little hesitating steps. "Oh Mother dear, catch me!" And Mother would put her arms around Muriel and help her to the sofa. If some one were coming who bored her, Muriel would complain of a great faintness. "Mother dear, I hate to desert you. You know I do, don't you? But I am afraid I am going to be sick again." And Mother would help Muriel to her room, undress her and tuck her away in bed, giving her a book to read. When the guest came, Mother would make excuses; and the guest would send up condolences to Muriel and perhaps, later, flowers. Did Muriel really know what she was doing? One doubts it.

If the woman who is our next example were not so lucrative to the profession, she would be pronounced the greatest of all pests to medicine. She is the wealthy woman of leisure who has a multitude of aches and pains. Every physician knows that what such a woman really needs is a job—a muscle-demanding, mind-absorbing job. Some physicians speak of her with rough contempt—when she is not around—and prescribe for the delicate creature a vigorous course in scrubbing floors and doing the family wash. We all know her, so there is no need of detailed description. Let us dwell upon her only long enough to note the real reason for her multitudinous maladies. The ordinary explanation given is that such a woman is bored, and that her boredom, centering attention upon herself, makes her take notice of otherwise unnoticed aches and pains. This reason does not, how-

ever, go to the root of the malady. As a matter of fact, disease is a means whereby such a woman can capture for herself a sense of importance.

To accomplish nothing distinctive, to be in no way an individual marked out from the rest, is intolerable to one's self-respect. Even a child wishes to be noticed; and, if no other way presents, he will make a nuisance of himself. The wealthy woman who has everything, but who does nothing; who is little more than an animated fashion-plate and a jeweller's show-case, is dangerously near to seeing herself as simply like all the rest of the display-patterns in her set. Disease, then, particularly disease which baffles her physicians and which sends her from one specialist to another, marks her out as different. She is interesting—at least, so she believes—to the baffled physicians. And because she thinks that they think she is an interesting case, she ventures to inform her friends how interesting she is. Thus the more variously and puzzlingly sick she is, the more revived and invigorated she is. She would not lose her little maladies for all the world, for they alone are what stand between herself and the extinction of her paltry individuality.

In the foregoing cases, the underlying motivation is fairly unconscious. The individuals mentioned would be the most surprised and hurt persons in the world if they were told exactly what they were doing. As a matter of fact, such persons cannot be *told*. They have to be helped to find out for themselves. That is why psychoanalysis of the broader type is so valuable. These unconscious motives need somehow to be dragged to the surface. It is significant, however, that an individual of this disease-utilizing type—particularly the woman who goes from one specialist to another—invariably comes to the psycho-physician with an inner



resistance which is exceedingly difficult to overcome. Not that such a woman stays away from psycho-physicians. Quite the contrary. These physicians of the mind are only so many more scalps for her belt. What she thinks they are going to find for her, however, is a mysterious repressed something or other—perhaps to be mentioned in a hushed voice—which will make her still more interesting to herself and to her friends, and for which she can the more copiously pity herself. She is not in the least prepared, therefore, and she does not in the least intend to let herself be exposed as a selfish, shallow ego, unconsciously trying, through self-induced illness, to get what she wants. The outstanding fact about her, in short, is that *she does not really wish to be cured*. It is this deep wish not to be cured which has somehow to be reached and altered.

Flight into disease often takes the form of an exaggeration. The child with a slight cut on his finger will wrap it up carefully, hold it in a protected position and insist that he cannot do his homework. When the wrappings are removed, one sees that it is only a cuticle scratch, the primary irritation having long since disappeared. Or again, a child with a slight sprain or bruise will develop a pronounced limp. He cannot possibly go to "gym" that afternoon. But if the fire-engine goes by or some other excitement occurs, he is off and away.

"Mary loves to tell all of us her troubles, crying for sympathy," writes a student. "She tells us of her headaches, her terrible nerves, her eyes, her backaches; and we must always be willing to shed a tear for her. Then if she does not talk about her poor health, which is rare, she begins to tell of other troubles. Her lessons are so much harder than other people's. She has not heard from Tom for a

week, or her family have forgotten her, or nobody loves her or sympathizes with her. She works herself into a state of tears over her miseries. You cannot joke with her about it,—she is in deadly earnest and is insulted. I happen to know that her family since she was tiny have listened patiently to her ailments, wept with her; and now she bores and distracts others.”

Whether out of fear, or selfishness, or passionate hungers, this is the kind of thing that people are constantly doing. Disease, for such persons, is a refuge and a blessed deliverer. It is profoundly necessary that we all recognize this. It is particularly necessary that we recognize it in the rearing and the teaching of children. Flight into disease is easy for the child. He is still too young to be wholly clear as to his motivation. Hence when the avoidance-wish is strong, or the wish to be noticed is on him, it is the easiest thing in the world for him to make himself believe he is sick. If that habit grows, however, the child is in a fair way to become that rather pitiful type of grown-up who, in the face of a difficult situation, gets his satisfaction not by vigorously working out his problem, but by taking refuge in disease.

### *What to Do*

How, now, shall such cases be handled? It will be illuminating, for a moment, to note how the abnormal cases of this “flight-into-disease” malady were treated during the war, for the pathological treatment may have some significance for normal life. The worst treatment was discovered to be sympathy and coddling. This may sound cruel to us, for we have learned to think of disease as something dis-

tinctly unfortunate, for which the patient is to be pitied. But in this particular kind of disease, it was found that when the patient was pitied, he actually grew worse. The medical officers found that they succeeded best when they assumed the attitude that they were not to be imposed upon. They devised various methods for showing up the unreal nature of the disease. For example, a patient with a functional loss of voice would be given a small dose of ether. Then he would be suddenly roused; and before he was aware of it, he would be answering questions put to him by the physician. Another method employed was that of strict discipline. There was no coddling or humoring or showing of sympathy. And finally resort was had to painful treatment, like electrical shocks.<sup>1</sup> "In the army in which we had the direction of the neurological center," writes Léry,<sup>2</sup> "we have had the satisfaction of seeing the number of 'nervous seizures' diminish from the time the rumor was spread . . . that with us 'seizures' were not in good repute."

What have these modes of treatment to do with normal persons? Let us return to Muriel T. If her mother, watching her closely, had discovered the evasional character of her illnesses, could she not have handled her daughter along the foregoing lines? Muriel is having one of her sudden illnesses. Of course, she must retire, says the mother. But no reading in bed, Muriel—not a syllable! Lights out—every one of them. And plain food. Or better, no food for at least twelve hours. Also, a bitter medicine (which a friendly physician could concoct out of water and a harmless drug). And no flowers or visits from friends. One suspects, that Muriel would very soon conclude that, in the

<sup>1</sup> Rosanoff, A. J., *Manual of Psychiatry*, p. 306. 5th Edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Commotions et Émotions de Guerre*. Paris, 1918.

words of Léri's soldiers, "seizures were not in good repute."

Of course the most important thing would be to convince Muriel of the purely psychological nature of her illnesses. In the hospitals, as the reader will remember, ether was administered to the mute patient, who, being suddenly aroused, spoke. It was a simple thing, then, to point out to him quite calmly that he never had had a real mutism. Could we devise an ether-substitute for Muriel and her kind? Again, Muriel has one of her illnesses. Immediately the mother sees to it that a tempting invitation comes to her for the thing that she most dearly loves to do. Muriel will recover quite miraculously. A mild suggestion that the recovery was rather sudden might have some effect. If this experiment were repeated a number of times, the suggestion might penetrate deeply enough, if not indeed to cure her, then at least to make her a good deal more wary in her illnesses.

### *Lest We Err*

There is, of course, grave danger that we may infer wrongly and handle a child or a grown-up with lack of sympathy when there is actually need for the greatest sympathy and care. It would be folly, for example, to believe that every "nervous" disease is a shamming; and even when there is obviously an avoidance-emotion which looks like shamming, the individual may not himself be consciously aware of what he is doing. Hence the diagnosis of these illnesses must be made with exceedingly great care, and always, of course, with the help of a trained physician, lest in the effort to kill a fabricated illness, we kill the patient.

Thus in every case, we should give the individual the

benefit of the doubt. However, if from the beginning, the flight-into-disease possibility be kept in mind and the individual carefully observed, we may in many cases discover the avoidance or the desire-reactions. When these repeat themselves to such an extent that there can no longer be doubt, then, in conference with the physician, the time is ripe for the more or less drastic measures which can best effect a change of basic attitude.

Has the reader ever known of anyone who was "miraculously" cured? It may have been by the laying on of hands or by the powerful influence of some sacred shrine—as when the hysterical blind see, the hysterical dumb talk. Has his confidence in medicine been shaken thereby? Has he perhaps concluded that all disease is mental and therefore only curable by psychological means?

Let him rethink his experiences in the terms of this chapter. Here we have found types of disease that *are* psychological in origin and that *can* be cured by psychological means. But does it follow therefore that all diseases are psychological in origin? We are here, I think, at the source of an error all too frequently made.

There are two beliefs about disease, both of which, apparently, are mistaken. The first is the belief that *all* disease is due to a kind of evil something of a physical or organic nature which infects the person and needs to be cast out, either by putting medicines into the body or by cutting out portions of it. The persons who thus believe have an utter scorn of the Christian Scientists, New Thoughtists, Miraculous Healers, etc.

On the other hand, there are the persons who believe that

*all* disease is mental in origin and that the casting of it out by mental or spiritual means is the only true process. Such persons have a horror of doctors and surgeons.

Does not the more accurate understanding of disease consist in the recognition that not all disease is of the same kind—that some of it is psychological, even to the extent that it is willed by the patient; while other disease is clearly due to causes independent of the patient's will? As to the first kind. "Nothing is so spectacular as when the hysterical blind see, the hysterical dumb talk, the hysterical cripple throws away his crutch and walks. In every age and in every country, in every faith, there have been the equivalents of Lourdes and St. Anne de Baupré."<sup>1</sup> These "miraculous" cures are just as real, apparently, as the cures by medicine or by the surgeon's knife. They simply differ as to the kind of disease cured.

If this is true, then there is unquestionably a place for such agencies as Lourdes and Christian Science (when these are properly limited in their scope). But there is, of course, also a place for doctors and hospitals. For, as we have indicated, there is also that other kind of disease which comes because of external infection, or because of some physical mal-functioning in the organism. For such disease the physician or the surgeon is wholly indispensable.

We have in the above chapter treated only one type of psychologically caused disease, the kind which roots in an avoidance or a desire-emotion. There are, of course, other types—as, for example, the case of an indigestion brought on by worry, a blood pressure increased by fear. For these there is necessary the physician of the mind, who can apply

<sup>1</sup> Myerson, A., *The Nervous Housewife*, p. 18.

the adequate psychological techniques for clearing up these maladies.

The understanding of the double causation of disease, then, enables us to overcome the fanaticism both of the pure mentalist and the pure physicalist. Physicians of the body and physicians of the mind are both necessary. As a matter of fact the really fine physician of the body is becoming increasingly a skilled physician of the mind, while the skilled physician of the mind is either himself a physician of the body or is in closest contact with him.

And now can the reader continue his self-exploration and his exploration of others, by finding examples of self-willed disease? Can he give a new name to certain "bilious attacks," certain "headaches," certain more or less convenient pains in the leg, or chest, or abdomen?

To find names which will tag these as simply means of escape or for getting what the person is too timid or too unintelligent to obtain by ways more direct and frank will occupy some interesting moments.

CHAPTER VII  
SOME OF US HAVE MOODS

The Micromanic and the Microdepressive

Moods are maddening—particularly if we have to suffer them in others. There is a baffling irrationality about them. The moody person cannot be argued with, is wholly or very largely unreasonable. Sometimes, as we suffer the blackness or the fury of a mood, we wonder whether the person is “all there.” There is a type of insanity which is essentially characterized by exaggeration of mood. It is called manic-depressive insanity.

Here, for example, is a woman, Gabrielle L., who was brought to an asylum and diagnosed as a case of manic-depressive insanity, manic phase. Her attack began with rambling speech, assaults upon other persons and a tendency to excessive drinking. She had previously been temperate in her habits; but now she began to drink to intoxication. Her skin was flushed, voice loud, gestures lively, clothing disarranged, hair down over her shoulders. She showed great familiarity with the physicians and attendants. It was impossible to get her to reflect before speaking; and when she spoke or did anything, her attention was constantly being distracted. If asked to write a letter, she would do so, jabbering all the time, reading aloud what she had read, and finally throwing down her pen after having written a few disconnected lines. She would try to do every kind of work, would make a few sweeps with the broom; then leave the



nurse with her pail of water and go and make peace between two quarreling patients. She would have frequent altercations with other patients who were annoyed by her screams, her songs and her wild pranks. She would pick up all sorts of objects and accumulate them in her clothes: scraps of paper, bits of glass, wood and metal, pieces of cheese. She herself would laugh when an inventory was taken of all this rubbish, and make no objection to its being taken away from her. She would eat at all times, abundantly and gluttonously. Her sleep was somewhat disturbed, and she would pass part of the night wandering about the dormitory, singing and jabbering.<sup>1</sup>

This woman, Gabrielle L., was in an asylum. Are there Gabrielle L.'s outside asylums? I have in mind the case of Miss J. Miss J. is a teacher, unmarried. When I think of Miss J., I get the feeling always of a kind of breathlessness of excitement. It envelops her. Invariably when Miss J. comes home her arms are bursting with packages. She has been shopping—in fact she always seems to have been shopping and always to be bursting with packages. She starts talking almost before she opens the door. "I've got just the *loveliest* things! Oh Helen, dear, you ought to go down to thirty-sixth street. There's a little store there. Its just the *darlingest*, and so *cheap*—and do you know whom I met there? No you can't guess—Jane—Jane *Richards*, of *all* people! No, don't bother about those packages. Yes, I'll be with you in just a minute. I *know* you've been doing *all* the work and waiting for me *so long*. Did that skirt of mine come back from the cleaners? Oh those *people*; you can't ever *trust* them! I vow and declare . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Rosanoff, A. J., *Manual of Psychiatry*, pp. 273-275. 5th Edition.

With Miss J., as the reader will at once observe, everything is superlative, and every superlative is explosive. But what is most characteristic is that the superlatives do not keep a steady course; they leap from one to another in a kind of excited irrelevancy. Any little thing will set Miss J. off; and once off, she zigzags breathlessly across her rocketing universe.

The essential trouble with her, of course, is that she has high-powered energy but low-powered central control. Miss J. always plans more things than she can put through; and then, in the end, either something mysteriously goes wrong, or she pushes the plans through with the greatest last-minute effort. If she does housework, she will overdo it, talking and suggesting, making a great amount of stir and getting far less accomplished than her energy justifies.

I am unable to say what happens in her classes, for she is simply and everlastingly a pourer-out. Talking all the time herself, she can hardly give her pupils opportunity for quiet thought and considering response.

Gabrielle L. was what we called a *manic* type. I think we should hardly be doing Miss J. an injustice, if we called her, in turn, a *micromanic* type.

### *More Micros*

The micromanic mood may, of course, exhibit itself in many forms, from the most buoyant euphoria, or feeling of well-being, to the most rasping and energetic irritability. "The manic temperament," writes Bleuler of his insane folk,<sup>1</sup> ". . . disposes to overhasty acts and to a thought-

<sup>1</sup> Bleuler, E., *Textbook of Psychiatry*, p. 485.

less manner of living in general, when it is not restrained by a particularly sound understanding and a particularly good morality. For that reason we find here on the one hand snobbish and inconsiderate, quarrelsome and cranky ne'er-do-weels, who have no staying power in their transactions, but on the other hand 'sunny dispositions.' "

The reader, no doubt, can easily find cases which will fit these different types of micromanic mood. The characteristic qualities, as we have seen, are (1) an abundance of energy, coupled with (2) high excitability, with (3) an abnormal tendency to distractability, resulting (4) in a kind of mental and emotional miscellaneity. The micromanic, like the fully insane maniac, is tangential. He does not stick to the point. Everything reminds him of something else. He goes booming ahead regardless of logic, jumping this way and that, leaping from irrelevancy to irrelevancy. He may be a chatterer, or a rattling arguer, or a nagger, or an excited bearer of tales; or he may be that type of person who dashes about in an assembly, his voice trailing on behind, his eyes already fixed on the next victim. Or he may be the person who flies into rage over all kinds of trifles, and then again, almost in an instant, is laughing and chattering. Or he may be the excited talker who never "gets there." I have a friend who is some day going to tell me of the great banquet which she attended in Seattle, Washington. She has been trying to tell it many times. But each time as she starts out with high exuberance, she must first visit all over the United States. Midway she lands on the quarrel they were having over the minister, her husband's hay fever, and what her daughter was doing in Chicago. Some day she will reach Seattle, Washington. It will be an epoch-making day!

*What To Do*

What makes a micromanic? And what can be done about it if one is so afflicted, or if one's child or friend or life-mate is so afflicted? Obviously, where there is high excitability, the first concern must be about the physical condition. The thyroid gland, in such cases, may be the offending member, for a person with an over-developed thyroid frequently exhibits the characteristics we have above described. Or there may be a nervous unbalance, arising from digestive malfunctioning and producing a high irritability, or from a cerebral affection, or from a defect in the sympathetic nervous system. The matter is too complex to be entered into here; besides, it falls outside the scope of this book. We can simply advise the highly distractable micromanic first of all to place himself in his physician's hands for a thorough physical overhauling.

In hosts of cases, however, the causation seems to be chiefly psychological and to lie in unfortunate mental habits. The afflicted person is untrained in the habit of concentration, of listening, of relaxing voice and muscles, of reflective consideration. How can one train oneself along these lines?

We noted among the characteristics of the micromanic one fine quality and three rather destructive qualities. The micromanic has loads of energy. That is his good quality. He is not the apathetic person, listless and bored. He has power enough to run a regiment. But coupled with this fine vigor we found an emotional excitability which ran this power to waste. Apparently, then, a relaxation from high tension is indicated for the micromanic. When he finds himself getting terribly enthusiastic or terribly wrought up or terribly anything, then is the time to let go the tension, to

relax the muscles, to lower the voice. Particularly to lower the voice. Actually talking softly often has a remarkable effect in untying the nervous knot.

But even high excitability might not be as disastrous as it is in the micromanic were it not, in turn, linked up with a high distractability. This inveterate habit of leaping, like a grasshopper, tangentially, crazily, never sticking to one point, never carrying a thought or an activity *through*—if one has this distressing, energy-consuming habit, one must begin to go into training. There must be a constant vigilance: "Am I leaping off the point? Have I said a dozen different things, when I ought to have stuck to one? Do I know, right now, as I talk, what I am really heading for? Am I really carrying one thing through, or am I making for a dozen different unrelated goals?" Irrelevancy is an affair of poorly trained mental action. One can train oneself to stick to the point as truly as one can train oneself to play chess.

Finally one may examine oneself for the mental miscellaneity resulting from these qualities. "Am I a picker-up of unconsidered trifles and a passer-on of unrelated mental fragments? Have I a mental rat's nest? Do I carry it around with me and exhibit its hodge-podge to my friends?"

Let us substitute for these three unfavorable qualities, the three corresponding good qualities. For high excitability, then, we shall substitute emotional calm, relaxedness, control. For distractability, we shall substitute concentration of purpose, the power to stick to a point or a project. For the resultant miscellaneity, we shall substitute order, beauty and a relevant whole. To change these minus qualities to plus is the basic problem of the micromanic.

*The Microdepressive*

Over against the manic is the depressive type of insanity. Let us examine a typical case.

"A man (33 years of age) was brought from the New York City Prison being charged with 'unlawful possession of firearms.' The patient was apprehended in a city park after drawing his revolver in an attempt at suicide. . . .

"The patient said: 'I wanted to kill myself. I tell you there is no use living. People don't like me; they don't want me. Everybody seems to avoid me. They shun my company. What is there for me to live for?'

"Mentally the patient was very sad; definitely depressed; he spoke in a slow, retarded manner. . . . He would sit for hours in the same place, and expressed ideas of insufficiency. He had no insight into his condition. His memory was good. His attention was somewhat defective. Orientation was intact. He was committed to the State hospital for treatment, diagnosis being Depressed Phase, Manic Depressive Insanity."<sup>1</sup>

Here again we have abnormality of *mood*. In the manic phase, the mood, as we saw, was one of high excitability; in the depressive phase just described, the mood is one of deep dejection.

Let us again ask our question. Are there persons in normal life who exhibit symptoms similar to those found in the depressive phase of insanity?

Here, I think, we can venture to build up a typical and familiar figure. X. comes home on a particular night, hangs his hat on the hat-rack with a sigh. His face is gloomy. That he is not always gloomy is evidenced by the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Sands and Blanchard, *Abnormal Behavior*, p. 198.

his children run to meet him. But this night he kisses them perfunctorily. "Don't bother me now." He greets his wife with a colorless "Hello." He takes his place at the dinner table with a creased brow and a lustreless eye. He sits absorbed in his soup. He has no lift, no encouraging glance for anyone. His wife, noting that the mood is on, serves him quickly and silently, hushing signs of disorder in the children. She has learned by experience not to ask the worried question: "John, dear, aren't you feeling well to-night?" The microdepressive does not like to be asked that question. He will glower. Best let him alone. Meanwhile the corners of his mouth sag; his shoulders sag; his coat sags; everything about him sags. After dinner he will slump into his armchair, smoke a cigar and bury himself in his newspaper. If he says anything at all, it may be a few sharp words about the cost of living or the generally unsatisfactory condition of the house or the children.

X., as we know, will recover from his depression and be properly ashamed of himself. To make up for his gloominess, he will probably, for a time, be kinder to his wife and children. But the black mood will be on him again—and yet again. The wife will sigh; the children will vaguely wonder what is the matter with dad; and dad will himself not really know what is the matter.

Here again is mood-exaggeration. It may easily, of course, be the result of some physical deficiency. The blood-count may be wrong, the liver out of order; one or other of the glands may be misbehaving; there may be insufficient or irregular elimination; there may be malnutrition, sexual unbalance, etc. Hence where there is a depression, the first step to be taken is an overhauling of one's physical con-

dition by the family physician. But there is no doubt whatever that a great deal of mood-unbalance is either purely functional or so largely so that all is needed is the proper psychological approach.

That we should at times be sorrowful and cast down is natural. In the case of the microdepressive,<sup>1</sup> however, the depression goes far beyond such natural warrant. It is long-drawn-out, excessive, distressing to others. It becomes a kind of disease. If the reader has ever been in one of these depressed moods, I think he will bear out the statement that when he is in that mood, he knows that he ought not to be in it. And yet he seems powerless to pull himself out of it.

That is why in the handling of a depressed person, speaking generally, it is altogether wrong to blame him for his dark moods, as if he were trying to be ugly. And it is equally poor technique to try to cheer him up. The depressed person does not need to be *told* to cheer up. He wants to, but he cannot. To tell him gaily that "cherries are ripe," or that he should "shake the grouch," only increases the pathological stubbornness of his gloom by rousing his defensive pride. Nor does he need to be told that he is making a fool of himself. He knows it. Only he cannot help himself—not just then.

It is significant in this connection that in the treatment of the depressed insane "psychic suggestion is counterindi-

<sup>1</sup> If the philological purist shudders at the word microdepressive because it is put together out of Greek and Latin parts, will he perhaps substitute the quite impeccable word "micromelancholic"? There Greek meets Greek. Why it should be so dreadful a sin to perform a verbal marriage ceremony between Greek and Latin I have never yet been able to discover. Perhaps it is a carry-over into philology from race prejudice.



cated.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, when the person is in his depression, it is hardly the time to put one’s arms around him and tell him that you love him and please won’t he smile. He will probably throw off the arm sullenly and sink more deeply into his gloom.

A favorite way of handling a gloomy child is to say to him sharply: “What’s the matter with you? Got a grouch on this morning? Can’t have any sour faces around here. Better go up to your room until you can get straightened out.” This method is comparable to the older method of treating the insane. They were scolded, beaten, kicked, denied food. Such “means of restraint,” writes Dr. Rosanoff, “always useless, often barbarous, have disappeared from institutions.” Apparently the corresponding methods of scolding, satire and outright punishment should disappear from our treatment of moods of depression in normal people.

The best thing to do with a depressed person—again speaking generally—is to let him alone. The next best thing is to see that during his mood he lives under conditions of wholesomeness and quiet. With children, a healthy diet, regularity in the household arrangements, adequate bodily elimination, and the daily bath are powerful auxiliaries in the overcoming of a persistently recurring depression.

When the individual has passed out of his mood and is again normal, then is the time to recall the situation and prepare to meet the next onset. As a matter of fact, the individual who is a victim of mood-depression will find that *getting ready for the next onset* is one of the chief ameliorators and perhaps the best deliverer from mood-depression. As the mood comes on he can say to himself: “Well, here we are again! I’ll make a fool of myself as usual. But the

<sup>1</sup> Rosanoff, A. J., *The Manual of Psychiatry*, 5th ed., p. 103.

thing will pass." And even while the mood is on, he can turn upon himself with a glimmer of humor salvaged from the general wreck, and say, "I'm keeping my eye on you, old man. You're not quite such an unmitigated fool as you were last time." Knowing that the thing will pass is a very important factor. It helps dispel the otherwise total and tragic seriousness of the grip of the mood. But it is only in the more grown-up years that one does know it.

In the case of the micromanic we found that the plus quality was an abundance of energy and that the chief minus quality was high distractability. In the case of the micro-depressive, on the other hand, there is a distinct absence of energy, and an over-great concentration. The depressed person simply cannot get away from himself. His thoughts revolve and keep revolving about the one area of his gloom. Thus there is indicated for him the reverse of what is indicated for the micromanic. What he needs is to disperse his concentration; to get himself away from his sheer obsessional centering. His cue, then, is to look for distraction. Sometimes the distraction comes out of a clear sky. A woman reports that she was in a particularly deep depression one day when a telephone call came telling her of a friend who needed to be taken instantly to a clinic. The woman pulled herself together, of course against her will, and went out to look after her friend. She came back at the end of the afternoon radiantly happy.

This dispersing of one's concentrated glooms is, however, no child's play. The depressed person may think that by going to Coney Island or to the movies he may shake off his depression. Sometimes the thing succeeds, but as often as not it works the other way. The person carries

his depressed self with him, looks at everything with a jaundiced eye, and returns even bitterer and gloomier than before. What is needed, of course, is something that will carry him *away from himself*. The most effective method of accomplishing that may be through an interest in some one else's problems.

### *Some Deeper Causes*

We have considered only a kind of generalized case of depression, what is usually described as a "fit of depression." But depression often has deep-lying causes which make it far more than a passing aberration and the cure of it more difficult than the foregoing would seem to indicate. There is the kind of depression, for example, which results from an ever-present feeling of inferiority or of failure, or the kind which comes when one is neglected by the person or persons one loves. There is the depression of "hurt feelings," and the depression of a deep despair about either oneself or the world.

The cure in these cases must go deeper into the personality. If one is inferior, what is one to do about it? The first thing to note, of course, is that depression does not help the situation; it simply hinders a healthy solution. One needs then frankly to face oneself and to observe the particular kind of folly one is committing by sinking into gloom. Or if one has made a failure, depression, while it may be permitted as a passing mood, becomes pathological when prolonged. As the modern slang goes, one needs to "snap out of it" and get to work repairing the damage. Or, to use the salty phrase of the sailor, one should "spit on one's hands and take a fresh hold."

If one's feelings are easily hurt, it is well to examine into the nature of this great sensitiveness. Is it a virtue, or is it not rather a sign of morbid ego-absorption? To be greatly occupied, in short, with one's own hurts would hardly seem to indicate an eager and persistent interest in things and persons outside oneself. Hurt feelings and the corresponding fits of gloom, indeed, would seem to expose a rather undue ego-centering in one's make-up.

### *Alternating Moods*

We have noted the manic moods and the depressive, and have shown how these moods, which, in their extreme form land one in an asylum, may be found in less extreme forms in normal life. Very often, however, the condition is complicated by an alternation of these moods. The manic condition may be succeeded by a depressive, then by a normal condition; or the depressive by a manic, and then again by a depressive. The combinations are various and oftentimes highly baffling. This is called the *cyclothymic* phase of the disease.

Let me briefly illustrate this condition in normal life by the case of old Mrs. Malloy. Mrs. Malloy was an Irish woman who lived in a cottage and kept chickens. A good part of her life was spent rushing out to the back yard and driving off the boys who delighted in shying stones at her fowls. Whether it was the boys or something deeper in her emotional life, Mrs. Malloy showed a distinct mood-unbalance of the alternating or circular kind. She was known to fluctuate between two conditions of mood. Neighbor children watched carefully to see whether she was in what they called her "blarney" mood or in her "hell-of-a-

mood." In her hell-of-a-mood she mumbled to herself with occasional loud ejaculations. Then things would come flying over the fence—a dust pan, an old broom, some chicken-wire. Valiant the youngster who would clamber on her fence when the hell-of-a-mood was on. But when the blarney mood was on! She would remark to her husband: "But ain't she the swate child!" And to the small girl on the fence, "An' how is yer father this marnin'? He's a grand man. Will ye be comin' in to see me new flowers?—that's a swate little girl!"

A certain business man doubtless stands for many thousands of his cyclothymic kind. One always approaches him through his secretary. "How is it this morning? Propitious?" If the secretary shakes her head, one postpones the visit. Brighter days will come; the sun will again shine from behind those gloomy clouds. On another day, "Propitious this morning?" "Fine," says the secretary; and one ventures into the restored sunlight of his presence.

We have presented only a few cases of the micromanic, microdepressive and cyclothymic moods. Again, we turn the matter over to the reader. These mood exaggerations are so troublesome because, while they are often highly decorative, they are, at the same time, exceedingly wasteful and distressing. Nothing good comes to the microdepressive through his gloomy mood. He is not even happy in it himself. And it certainly is far from adding to the happiness of others. Again, the micromanic, while seemingly full of abounding life, is actually wasting a prodigious amount of energy. All his reactions are far more explosive than need be. Hence he is using up an amount of vitality that might easily produce results far beyond what he ac-

completes. And as for the cyclothymic, with his ups and downs, his exhilarations and his grumps, he really makes himself a nuisance.

There is a large problem ahead of us. How can we build up a strong balance in the emotional life—not the kind of balance that is static, but the kind that is dynamic? The problem, of course, again pushes back into the childhood years. It is the pampered child who most easily becomes the depressed adult—the whiner, self-pitier, gloomer, sulker. It is the pampered child, also, who most easily, as an adult, flies into irritable rage when things are not readily conquered. But also, it is the overdominated child who may become the easily depressed adult. Never having been permitted joyously to live out his own life, he may have learned to find his habitual escape from situations by shutting himself up within himself, perhaps forcing attention by his gloomy moods. But again, it is the child who has been alternately thwarted and given way to who may become the highly excitable type. Having learned no secure and calm self-control, he may be continually ready to “fly off the handle.” Or the child brought up by a fussy and nervous mother may in time become a fussy and nervous adult.

Having recognized the types, can the reader now make his excursion into normal life and “spot” the victims? And as he does so, can he ask himself the question: “What was it that brought on the excessive excitability or the excessive tendency to gloom?” We have only scratched the surface in this chapter—particularly as to causes. And then can the reader ask himself: “How shall we bring up a child so as to enable him to escape this tendency to mood-exaggeration?” And finally: “If I have a mood-exaggeration myself, or someone else has one, what can be done about it?”

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHEN FEARS BESET

#### Phobias, Abnormal and Normal

A man comes to a psychiatrist with an incomprehensible dread of knives. He cannot bear to see them; he fears to touch one lest he cut someone's throat. Another man, for some unknown reason, has a fear of open spaces. As he stands before a city square, he suddenly turns pale, trembles all over, and creeps back into a sheltering alley. Silly, he tells himself, preposterous! And yet there it is, the unaccountable dread! Another may be shaken with fright in a crowd, so that he will fight his way to escape. Another may go all to pieces at the sound of running water. What is the cause of these curious fear-phenomena?

A girl exhibited a "running water" phobia from her seventh to her twentieth year. The sound of splashing water particularly excited her. She had no recollection whatever of anything in her life which could have produced this curious dread. The cause, however, was later revealed. As a little girl of seven she had been in the country one day with her mother and aunt. Her mother, having to return home early, left her with the aunt, warning her under no circumstances to wander off into the woods by herself, which the child promptly did. The aunt, after a long search, found her in the middle of a brook, wedged in among the rocks

with a waterfall splashing over her head. She was screaming with fear. After being rescued, she begged her aunt not to tell her mother. The aunt promised faithfully, and nothing was said of the matter. Shortly after this, the curious dread of running water began to manifest itself and continued for thirteen years. But the young girl was utterly in the dark as to the cause of her phobia, for she had forgotten the event in the woods. Then one day the aunt returned, and being informed of the nature of the phobia, greeted the girl with the words, "I have never told." This revived the memory of the early fear, and the phobia rapidly disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

We have here a fairly typical phobia-situation: a fright, a feeling of guilt, the wish not to have the escapade mentioned, the consequent repression of the whole matter, the later conversion of the fright into a similar form, the cause unrecognized by the patient.

It is important to note here the *conjunction of a sense of guilt with the fear*. I am not prepared to say that every phobia, if traced to its beginnings, would disclose the presence of a guilt-feeling, although there is a growing belief among psychologists that such is the case. "It is probable that a phobia, in the special sense of the word illustrated by these cases, is not found without this . . . factor."<sup>2</sup> Whether this is true or not, there is unquestionably a large enough number of phobias in which the fear-shame combination is present to make of them a class worthy of analysis and special treatment.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. Bagley, *The Etiology of Phobias*, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, vol. xvii, 1922. Cited by McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> McDougall, Wm., *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 307.



*A Fear Unexpressed*

Let us note another type of fear-disorder. It is best illustrated by the remarkable case of Mr. C. W. Beers, the author of "A Mind That Found Itself." Mr. Beers, as a young lad, was called upon to take care of his slightly older brother, who had developed epileptic fits. The horror of these seizures was increased for the young lad by the fear that they were contagious and that he, too, might soon go the way of his brother. Had he mentioned his fear to anyone, it could, of course, have been instantly dispelled. But this was just the sort of fear which one shrinks from mentioning, for there is a kind of social odium attached to epilepsy; one has a guilty sense of being incurably tainted, a kind of potential social pariah. So young Beers kept his fear to himself, with the result that its haunting presence undermined his health, making him nervous and apprehensive. During the strain of his last year at college, he became convinced that he actually had the disease, and that people were hiding the fact of his seizures from him. This cast him into a deep mental gloom, which ended finally in a fit of insanity, during which he threw himself from his window. He miraculously escaped death and was taken to an asylum.

Now began the remarkable part of the history: his slow, determined and finally successful effort to regain his sanity. The largest factor, perhaps, in that recovery was the unburdening himself of his morbid fear and the immense relief of the discovery that the fear was utterly groundless. But ten years of his life had been spent in an insane asylum because of his ignorance of that simple fact!

Here, again we find the element of shame and again the

repression. In this case, however, we find no element of disobedience, but only a kind of tragic ignorance.

### *Passing to the Normal*

There are two typical conditions in normal life which seem to be patterned upon these abnormal cases. The first is the condition of adult shyness or timidity. The shy person carries about with him an ever-present fear. No careful study has been made of this painful and deenergizing condition among grown-ups, chiefly because a shy or timid grown-up who has no other disabilities does not ordinarily present himself for psychological examination. In the cases of several otherwise normal persons, however, who have come under my observation and who have either shown or complained of an extreme shyness, it became apparent that they had all been through a childhood either of oversolicitous care or of unreasonable prohibitions.

One young man of twenty-eight, suffering in his business from inordinate shyness, had been held back by his mother from most of the normal exploits of childhood—swimming, baseball, football, and the rest. A fear of these had been developed in his young life. But it was not a straight, wholesome fear. With it there had been engendered a sense of shame that he could not do what the other boys did. More than that, he could not tell the other boys that his mother would not let him do these things, nor that he was ashamed of not being able to do them. Hence the typical repression of the fear and the shame, the rankling, the haunting dread of being thought a sissy and a coward. So he shrank from rough-and-tumble contacts, kept to him-

self, grew up to be the sensitive and fearful young man he was at twenty-eight.

Another typical case pointed directly to a home in which the child was constantly being "jumped on." The mother was nervous and irritable; the father gloomy and straight-laced. The child could not make even a slight noise but the parental wrath would descend upon him; he could not utter a request but it would be met either with a torrent of scolding or with puritanical moralizing. He grew up in constant fear of what might happen to him; in constant shrinking from the expression of his feelings and wishes; and with an ever-present sense of guilt engendered by the endless prohibitions and moral admonitions.

There can be no question that an untold amount of suffering has been caused by engendering in children the feeling of fear-plus-guilt. There was the teacher with her stern discipline and her demerits, throwing into the child the fear and the guilt of failing in his lessons. And at home: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself." "What will your father think of that?" "You know that you are a naughty little girl, don't you?" "God will punish little boys who tell lies." How God loomed as a day-and-night terror! I know one woman who as a little girl went into a condition of hysterics because she had been told in Sunday School that the "Eye of God" was always on her.

### *The Rest of Us*

But most of us are not shy. At least, we are not people-shy; we get along fairly well with our fellow-men. It is probably true, however, that most of us are idea-shy—which may, at times, be even worse.

What do I mean by idea-shy? Note what happens in childhood. The child enters a world of which he is, at the moment of birth, in completest ignorance. He no sooner is in that world, than he is controlled by it. Apparently there is an order of reality around him and about him which he must accept. If he rebels against that order, he is punished. He soon learns that the way of happiness for him is the way of acquiescence in things as they are arranged.

Most of this is as it should be. Facts are facts; life-conditions must be obeyed. But as he grows up, he meets not only facts but opinions—the opinions of his elders. Many of these opinions have been hardened into conventions, forms of etiquette, rules of behavior, attitudes toward life-problems. The elders may at times have an inkling of the difference between actual fact and man-made conventions. Not so the child. He learns to accept the two indiscriminately. So the child is trained to fit into his world, both of fact and convention; and all the subtler and cruder enginery of threat is brought to bear to arouse fear-plus-guilt in him, should he by chance fail to fit.

It is not surprising, then, that the outstanding characteristic of most grown-ups is an obsession with what might be called *nomic phobia*, a fear of going against custom or tradition. Adults, by the time they are grown up, are practically all custom-broken, tradition-broken, and thus idea-broken.

Hence the average adult is timid about trying new ways, shy of expressing new opinions. But this average grown-up does not know that he is timid. He comes to believe that the customs and the views he accepts are those he has freely and intelligently accepted. So when they are opposed, he flies into rage, as at an insult to himself.

Thus there are, one suspects, as truly idea-phobias as

there are knife-phobias or crowd-phobias or open-space-phobias. The man who stands before his open space shrinks in terror. The grown-up, presented with a radically new idea—it may be socialism, or birth-control, or the abolition of armaments, or even so trifling a matter as a change in the Sunday ceremonial—likewise shrinks in dread. In both cases the dread is unreasoning, and in both cases the cause of the dread is not really understood. But the cause, as we have seen, is to be found in the guilt-feeling which education, whether in the school or in the home, so frequently attaches to deviation from standard procedures and ideas.

*Can We Change the Condition?*

What can be done about it? For grown-ups, perhaps very little. The bridle-broken horse does not easily recover the independent vigor of his untamed condition. The adult who has been alternately threatened and cajoled into the accepted folkways, finds it at last hard even to imagine different modes of life. Does this average individual deplore his enslaving to the thought-habits and the institution-habits of his fathers? For the most part, he does not. He becomes a "good citizen," and in the name of "what is right" proceeds to stamp out such sparks of independence as threaten to burn away what he has been taught to respect.

And yet even an adult, once made vividly aware of the nomic phobias wrought in him by the society of his elders, might, in his mature life, turn in resentment against the indignities committed upon him in the name of a too narrowly conceived education. He might, like the philosopher Descartes, decide, at least provisionally, to take nothing for granted of what had been taught him about manners

and institutions and seek to build up for himself a fairly satisfactory conception of the world of interrelated life.

Education, no doubt, must be broadened and extended to include this kind of reinterpreted and reconstructive thinking. At what stage can such thinking best be done? Some preparations may be made in childhood years. Everything depends upon the kind of emotions that accompany the fitting-in process. For example, there is not much hope for healthy mental initiative in later life in a child brought up by a fear-inspiring, guilt-inducing parent, who, in addition, is hopelessly hide-bound. Nor can much mental courage be expected in later life if teachers of the child crack the whips of ominous threat, insist upon dogmatic acceptance, and punish deviation in ideas—particularly if such teachers, in their own mental life, are as timid as rabbits.

The attitude, both in parents and teachers, should be one of putting it up to the child, inducing him to think things out and work things out for himself. There should be an encouragement of wholesome questioning on the child's part and particularly of a seeking for better ways of doing things.

How to rid ourselves of fear-inspiring parents and teachers is of course a most baffling problem. "How shall we get children *past their parents?*" asks Dr. Joseph K. Hart despairingly. The good work, however, is beginning. Parents are beginning to free themselves of the old techniques of punishment and repression. So are teachers. Parents and teachers are learning to encourage in children joyous initiative, freedom of expression, creative functioning, and to discourage repression, fear, and slavish imitation.

But even at best, the child-mind is as yet too meagre in life-experience to confront the human enterprise and make

discriminating estimates of its values. Hence we must still, I think, reserve childhood and adolescence chiefly for getting the young life adjusted to those truths about which there can be no doubt whatever. The chief part of the evaluating process must be carried on in the adult period. It is when life is relatively matured, when there has been some garnering of experience, that the mind must be permitted freely and quite without fears to take stock of its world; to rethink it, and perhaps even go some way towards reshaping it. That, one suspects, will eventually be the chief objective of adult education, once adult education really becomes aware of its unique function in the whole scheme of life.

### *Fears in the Best of Us*

There are certain other fears that practically all of us have, fears which tend very considerably to lessen the vigor and richness of our life-experience. Let me illustrate. If, in the company of a number of friends, the reader were asked: "Would you mind taking this piece of charcoal and drawing us a picture—a fairly large picture and one which expresses some feeling you have or something beautiful you have seen?" I suspect that, unless he were already an artist, he would shake his head bashfully and reply, "Oh no, I can't draw. I am not in the least artistic." If the reader were to go on and say all that he felt, he would probably add: "I should be ashamed to exhibit in this company my utter lack of graphic skill." Or if he were asked: "Won't you compose a melody to these verses?" he would protest his complete incapacity.

The reader, in brief, like the rest of us, lives in a constant fear of established standards or technical requirements and

of exhibiting how woefully short he falls of them. There are the standards, admittedly essential, which have been built up by the hard work of artists. There are the standards in music, in poetry, in prose writing, in the writing of plays, in sculpture.

So the fear is in us all—a fear plus a shame—shame in our inadequacy. And, because that fear-plus-shame is in us, we withhold our awkward hands and our inexperienced minds, with the result that we doubtless miss a great many vitalizing experiences which might otherwise considerably enrich us. We might call this fear which dogs all our adult foot-steps, *horophobia*, since *horos* means a standard or rule.

I have recently had the pleasure of trying out an interesting experiment with adults. It was carried through as part of the program of adult education at a unique summer session held at Mills College, California, in the summer of 1927.<sup>1</sup> The idea back of this particular experiment was the one I have just suggested: that adults suffer from a great many inhibitions, which prevent them from entering into vitalizing experiences.

The problem was to break down these inhibitions. The particular means used to accomplish this end was an art room. But it was an unusual kind of art room in a number of respects. In the first place, there was no teacher present, only an assistant. This person did not tell the adult students "how to do it"; and particularly she did not tell them "how not to do it." There were, in short, no awe-inspiring technical requirements to be lived up to. Consequently there

<sup>1</sup>The summer session was the outcome of the efforts of an original minded leader in adult education, Miss Ethel Richardson, Director of Adult Education of the California Department of Education.



could be no sense of failure and of shame at not achieving something that was expected.

In the second place, there was nothing that these students *had* to do, nothing that anybody in authority demanded of them. They were invited in to do absolutely as they pleased. If they wished to do nothing at all, they could, without embarrassment, wander out as they pleased.

The results were quite beyond our expectations. At first there was hesitation. A woman would come shyly into the room. Paint? Oh no, she had never painted. Model? Oh, dear no, she had never had an art-lesson in her life. One woman said rather sadly, when it was suggested that she go ahead and have a good time, that she had had three years of art training and had had all the courage taken out of her. So they would come, shy, afraid—and yet somehow wanting to get hold of those fascinating chinks, wanting to mold that clay into shapes, wanting to sweep their hands over those generous sheets of paper—afraid lest they do something “inartistic,” something which someone would laugh at or condemn. Oh no, they would just look around a little at what the others were doing. “Thank you very much, Professor. It is so interesting.” And half an hour later they would be sitting on a wooden horse in front of a drawing board, trying out those chinks or poster-paints.

Fears went when technical requirements and imposed standards went. And then something happened. Standards began to emerge—of themselves. One woman first copied a plaster cast of Napoleon. Then she saw there was something wrong with her copy. What was it? She puzzled her head. Ah, she had it! It wasn't *alive*. That was a discovery. She had found out that things might be copied dead. She struggled with an idea: how to make that Napoleon of hers

*come alive*. And finally, by a stroke of the charcoal, she did make it come alive.

Note the pronoun, *she*. No one told her. No one even knew that it was her problem. Then this happened. That woman, who had never drawn before, started to work out how to make drawings that came alive. She would cover sheet after sheet of the unprinted newspaper with charcoal sketches out of her head, of torsos and faces and whole figures, which she would shape and twist and readjust so that they should become living. Some came, some did not. Some came remarkably, vividly. The significant point about this is that that woman who had never drawn in her life, who would have shrunk from exhibiting herself with a piece of charcoal, was actually, day after day, *working out a technique for herself and by herself*. And in the end, she accomplished results that were surprising in their sheer vitality.

Another woman who had never modeled took the clay into her hands and almost instantly discovered in herself a feeling for plastic form. The first thing she molded into shape, a bucking bronco, was so vigorously and protestingly alive that persons that saw it would say laughingly: "Look out, he'll kick!"

I shall not take the time here to recount the things done in that art room, particularly the surprisingly various capacities revealed in those different inexpert grown-up individuals. We humorously called it the "adult kindergarten." It was indeed a place without restraint, without imposed standards, without requirements; above all, a place shorn wholly of fear and of the shame which goes with a conscious inferiority to the technical requirements of the experts. It was a place in which adult inhibitions could be

freed, with the result, that the adults found themselves living through experiences which stimulated and enriched them. And they had a surprising amount of fun.

I cite this experiment simply for what it suggests in the way of possibilities. The *horophobias* are with us always. They check us. They make us bashful. They turn us away from vitalizing experiences which everyone of us should have if the fulness of human individuality is to be realized.

The reader, if he is interested, will not have to search far for traces of devitalizing fears. They are our most besetting sins. Some fears, of course, are not only justifiable but wholly wise; but there are many which have no possible excuse for being. What usually puzzles us so much is why these useless fears beset us.

The reader will discover them taking many subtle forms. He will find that they are fears not only of things or of people, or of events, or of circumstances, but, more illusively, of ideas, attitudes, philosophies, standards and rules. And he will doubtless note how destructive to effort and advance such fears can be.

He will discover, of course, how large a part is played in them by the element of guilt or shame. And he will probably realize how utterly mistaken it is to implant unnecessary guilt or shame-feelings in life, whether that life be young or old. As a result of his investigations, he will doubtless reach the conclusion that life is never to be advanced by the fear-shame-inducing techniques, but only by those techniques which arouse enthusiasm and give birth to joyous confidence.

Then he may perhaps turn a searching eye upon our school systems and note where they are psychologically in

error. Also upon home discipline. Then perhaps upon economic life. And then perhaps he may be ready to answer for himself the deeper and more difficult question: How can grown-up life be freed of its many implanted fears?

## CHAPTER IX

### A UNIFYING IDEA

#### The Psychopathic Pattern

If the reader has been able to carry on despite this fairly discouraging tale of human feebleness and folly, can he now find a central idea running through this apparent miscellany of maladies? We began, as he will remember, with the human propensity to regress to infantile behaviors. Then we passed on to that other propensity to remain fixated on one or another of the life-levels. Then we noted a curious way in which our minds worked: instead of instantly and continuously yielding ourselves to the objective facts, we found that we almost invariably built into the facts our own strong wishes. We noted, then, the curious manner in which the individual, baffled in one way or another, took refuge in disease, using disease not only as a way of escape but as a way of getting something strongly desired. Then we passed to the always annoying, often pitiful effort to maximize our egos by the unreal way of self-excuse, self-pity, and the belief that someone or other was not treating us as our talents deserved.

We noted the devitalizing presence of moods—the manic moods that used up life-energies without proportionate achievement; the depressive moods which cast so disheartening a gloom over the whole life-enterprise that the individual gave it all up in melancholy despair. Finally, we went on to note the strange manner in which fear translated itself

into symptoms, symptoms which the person himself could not, for the most part, understand.

Is there any idea which binds all this diversity of maladies together? Let us take them up one by one.

The adult who regresses to the infantile—whether by pushing off the disagreeable, or by tantrums, or what not—evades. He cannot face his problem. So he tries to achieve his wishes by methods that are perhaps effective but non-solvent. Again, the individual who fears to mount to the next life-level evades. He is happy where he now is—whether he is the pre-school child, or the adolescent supported by his parents, or the irresponsible philanderer. Again, when the individual projects his own emotions or wishes into situations, is he not failing to meet the reality? If he faced certain facts squarely, it might mean shame to himself, a discomfort, a certain defeat; at least it might mean that he must adjust himself with arduous effort to those facts. Far easier, then, for him to shape the facts in the image of his desires. Then he is victorious; then he keeps his self-respect. Hence the snobberies, the prejudices, the race-superiorities are the ways in which, through evasion, individuals secure their easy triumph.

And even when he introjects, is not the same process in evidence? Suppose the individual is a carbon-copy, a yes-man. Does that mean that he feels inferior? By no means—not, certainly, until he recognizes the fact that he *is* a yes-man. A yes-man loves to take the imprint of his neighbors. He feels a glow of satisfaction in being like the rest. He can repeat their phrases, nod solemnly at their judgments; he can despise all those who dress differently or behave differently or think differently. Unable to think for himself, he evades the task of shaping his own judgments. He makes a

virtue out of his weakness, and, with all his sheep-like fellows, turns up a superior nose at the independent minds.

That the same mechanism is at work in "flight into disease" is obvious. The longed-for triumph is actually secured through illness. Paranoia, again, is so obviously a flight into an evasional superiority that we need hardly elaborate upon the idea. All self-pity is for the sake of enhancing one's own sense of hurt innocence; all self-excuse is an effort to assure oneself that one is really superior and that the world meanly refuses one one's deserts. All fantasy of greatness is the individual's poor resort against the disillusionment of self-revelation. The paranoiac and the microparanoiac, then, work out an admirable technique for fooling themselves; and they are happy in their self-delusion.

And so it goes with our greater or lesser illnesses of mood. The manic is frequently a person who escapes by the very art of being over-occupied. He cannot calmly face his world. It terrifies him or reproaches him. So he plunges into a fury of occupation—goes to one meeting after another, fusses and fumes with much business, in order to silence something within him, to guard against something which threatens to break in upon him. Does the microdepressive likewise evade? He looks all down and out. But if the reader has ever been in a depressed mood, he will recognize how, while in that mood, he has built up all kinds of triumphant resentment. He hopes he *will* die: then they will know what a fine fellow he was. Depression is often itself a kind of victory, a victory of defeat. The world needs us? Then the world can go hang! We will sit in our corner and eat our woolly worm; and they can all go wondering about us, tip-toeing lest they disturb us, creasing their brows and worrying out their souls over our precious condition!

It is a little more difficult, perhaps, to note the same mechanism of evasion at work in the case of phobias, but analysis seems to bear out its presence—at least in those phobias in which shame is added to the fear. It is characteristic of them that there is not at the beginning a frank, fearless facing-out of the shame. The little girl did not go straight to her mother and tell about falling into the brook; young Beers did not carry his fear of epilepsy to a physician and have it out. In each case, there was, voluntarily or involuntarily, a shrinking away from the real situation. He or she suppressed the shame, tried to forget it. Then, curiously enough, but all according to rule, the fear-guilt translated itself into a form in which the unaccountable fear was present *but from which the guilt-feeling was absent*. Thus the individual, while indeed suffering the phobia, actually rose superior to the shame, and so accomplished his triumph.

We do, then, seem to find one idea which clarifies running through all these types of behavior. "The psychopathic individual," writes Bleuler,<sup>1</sup> "cannot adapt himself . . . he reacts to difficulties . . . either by evasion:—he may take refuge from the demands in hysteria or neurasthenia . . . through grandiose and persecutory delusions,—or aggressively, by attempts to adapt the external world to his necessities, or by both together." The psychopath, in short, and the normal person with certain psychopathic tendencies are runners-away-from-reality.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bleuler, E., *Textbook of Psychiatry*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> "We are beginning to realize," writes C. K. Ogden (*Meaning of Psychology*, p. 312), "with the aid of the doctor, that our neuralgia, our headache, our migraine, our dyspepsia, and even our pthisis are, no less than the phobias, the hysterias, the anxieties, and the other neuroses which loom so large in the contemporary social picture, as often as not ways in which



Dr. Alfred Adler would describe the same idea somewhat differently. Every person, he would say, has the wish and the will to be superior in some respect. If he is actually inferior, he seeks nevertheless to establish his superiority. He may try to do this in one of two ways: the useful or the useless. The useful way is that in which he faces his obstacles and either overcomes them or finds a compensating way of life that is socially worth while. The useless way is that in which he faces away from his obstacles and seeks his triumph through various evasional procedures. Real superiority must come through life-mastery. False superiority comes through life-evasion.

### *The Issue*

We come, then, directly to the major issue: How can the human individual be built up, from earliest childhood, so that he will win his triumphs not by evasion but by secure life-mastery?

If the reader will cast his mind over the cases we have cited, he will note that in all of them there was some psychological weakness in the person's make-up. How did that weakness come about? How might it have been prevented? How, in short, might a *strong psychological constitution* have been developed?

When a person suffers from a lack of red blood-corpuscles, we are dodging some awkward situation or decision. We have been evading the issue. We have lost touch with reality. And again, just as we evade the personal problem, so civilization as a whole is evading the cosmic issue. Vaguely apprehensive that the old solutions in their traditional form can no longer be squared with the facts, we turn wistfully backwards or compromise with some morbid phantom which we conjure up to screen us from the abyss. But we must dare to be wise, and the way to wisdom lies through knowledge of ourselves."

the physician pronounces the dread word, anæmia. Is there not a condition which might be called *psychological anæmia*, one, in other words, in which there is a deficiency of those mental and emotional factors which develop the vigorous resistances and the strong qualities that go with a dynamic individuality? If we are parents, we wish to guard our children against such a deficiency. If we are adults, and have the deficiency, we wish to know how we can get rid of it.

It is to this problem of building up a strong psychological constitution that we shall address ourselves in Part II. It is a problem that has been altogether too little explored, and yet it is obviously basic to all education, to all child-training, and to all the later development of the individual. In much of what follows, we shall treat of matters that are not usual in psychological discussion. I think we shall find, however, that they are fundamental to the whole question of building up vigorous and reality-facing individuality.

PART TWO  
TOWARDS REALITY



## CHAPTER X

### EXPANSIVES AND CONTRACTIVES

#### The Basic Psychological Patterns

In the early chapters of this book, as certain slight aberrations in normal people were set forth, one after another, the reader doubtless kept asking, "Well, what can be done about that particular case?" He may have wondered why in each instance ways of handling the difficulty were not indicated fully, and in detail. Only partial indications have been given for a fundamental reason. Personality must be built up, not merely by attacking particular symptoms, but by re-conditioning and reinvigorating the entire psychical constitution.

How can this be done? The answer is a long one; but I am convinced that the root of it lies in accepting what we shall discover in the present chapter to be the reaction-pattern fundamental to all psychological health.

If we penetrate to the most basic of the human reactions, we find, I think, that they resolve themselves into two opposite movements of the organism. Watson<sup>1</sup> concludes that the emotional reaction-patterns are three: fear, rage and love. As he has shown in his experiments with infants, if support is suddenly taken away from an infant and it is allowed to drop, or if a crashing sound is made behind its back, the infant will show signs of fright. Fear, then,

<sup>1</sup> Watson, John B., *Behaviorism*, p. 113. W. W. Norton & Co.

is an original or inborn emotion-pattern. If the infant's arms are held tightly to its sides, it will struggle to free itself. Rage, therefore, is likewise an original emotion-pattern. Again, if one gently strokes the infant's skin, it will give signs of evident delight—the basic love-pattern.

Now it should be observed that two of these emotion-patterns belong together in sharp contrast with the third. Fear and rage are both defense-reactions. They are both efforts to escape. Fear escapes by running away. Rage escapes by pushing away—sometimes by injuring or annihilating the opposing force. In both cases there is no wish for union with the particular feared or hated object. The wish is entirely for disunion.

Fear and rage are, of course, necessary forms of human reaction. If the organism did not fear certain things, it would soon cease to exist. If it were not able to defend itself against attack, it would soon disappear. But it is also obvious that if either fear or rage is carried to an extreme, if either is permitted to be more than purely cautionary, it may seriously deplete the life-activities. Thus, for example, a person who shrinks from all contact, who is inordinately shy, or unable to meet a situation with vigor, fails to establish the relationships that are apparently necessary to a wholesome, growing life. In like manner, a person who everlastingly rages—the fellow with a chip on his shoulder, the irritable grouch, the eternal quarreler—becomes such a nuisance that all men flee his presence.

Love, on the contrary, is quite the opposite of a defense-reaction. While fear and rage are necessary as cautionary reactions, the effective life-process is chiefly carried on by means of this contrasted type of reaction *which seeks union with its world*. The individual seeks union with food, with

shelter, with tools, with persons, books, institutions, movements, ideas.

We have, then, two basic modes of reaction: on the one hand, the contractive, avoiding reaction; on the other, the expansive, approaching reaction. When the contractive reactions predominate unduly, we have a type of person whom we propose to call a "contractive." When, on the other hand, the expansive reaction predominates, we have an "expansive."

### *A Distinction*

Before we go on to describe these two fundamental types in detail, however, it will be important to guard ourselves at the outset against a possible confusion. Jung has made us all familiar with "introverts" and "extraverts." Are we not here, with different words, describing these same two types?

No, and for two reasons. In the first place, Jung's division into extraverts and introverts has reference to the *kind of objects* which the individual inherently or natively favors. If he is inherently interested in outer objects, so-called, he is an extravert; if in "inner" objects—ideas, reflections, etc.—he is an introvert. Our contractive-expansive distinction, on the other hand, as we shall see, has reference to the *area* and the *movement* of the individual's interest, whether it is narrowly constricted, centered in himself, moving towards himself, or widely ranging and moving towards interests outside himself.

The distinction may be clarified by noting how the types cross each other. Take, for example, a typical introvert—a dreamer. A dreamer is, in the present sense of the word,

a contractive if his dreams are centered in himself. On the other hand, he is an expansive if his dreams, while not translating themselves into action (extravert), concern themselves, as in the case of a political or social dreamer, with possible reconstructions of the world in which he lives. His dreams may indeed be seeds which, cultivated by others, profoundly change the world. The contractive's dreams, on the other hand, centering in himself, die within himself. Thus an introvert may be either a contractive or an expansive. Take, now, a typical extravert. He is interested in outer things. On the one hand, he may be a contractive extravert, interested in possessing and holding for himself—the miser type, for example. On the other hand, he may be an expansive extravert, interested in producing, giving forth—the entrepreneur, inventor, artist type.

In the second place, Jung's introverts and extraverts are born that way and remain that way to the end. Whatever modification of themselves they make, must lie within the boundaries of their original type-nature. But, as we shall try to show, whether one is a contractive or an expansive depends in large measure upon the way one's life is developed. Therein, I think, lies the especial value of the type-distinction we are here proposing. We are, in short, not compelled simply to accept our own types as fixed. We can do something about them. We can even change over from one to the other.

### *Contractives*

A timid person is a contractive. He tends always to shrink away. He gathers himself to himself, hides himself



in a corner. Timidity, of course, takes many forms. It may manifest itself as physical cowardice—an actual running away; or as shyness—a staying away from dinners, parties, etc. It may show itself in an inability to make love. The sex-feelings may be overpowering, but the poor swain may be unable to do anything but blush and stammer and run away. Or it may take the form of an excessive sensitiveness, a fear of rebuff, when the individual draws within himself and fails to achieve expansive contacts.

The inveterate hater is a contractive. He pushes the hated ones or the hated things out of his life, refuses to make contact with them. Hate may take the milder form of disgust, in which case it is still a pushing-off, a refusal to make contacts.

The inveterately distrustful person is a contractive. He holds others off at arm's length, refuses them admittance to his councils and his confidence. If he is widely distrustful—of persons, ideas, movements, motives, of the age in which he lives—he is unable to join in with anything or anybody. He shrinks to a querulous isolation. If he is even distrustful of himself, he shrivels up into a pitiful futility.

The discouraged person also is a contractive. Life has swung away from him, left him stranded. He cannot translate his inner wishes into actual fact. He is, therefore, cast back upon himself. But his self is now a poor refuge, because it ceases to reach out and make life-expanding contacts.

The irresolute person is a near cousin to the discouraged person and so is likewise a kind of contractive. A decision is to be made. What shall he say? What do? He hesitates, un-

decided. He labors under a kind of continual inhibition. He wants to "hook on," but he is so continually in doubt that the hooking on does not take place.

Another type of contractive is the jealous person. He wants everything himself—all the love, the glances, the interest. He does not himself reach out generously, give of himself, give freely to the other. He is always afraid of losing what he wants, so he holds it tightly to himself, until it is often crushed in the holding.

There are other types of contractives: the sulky, morose person; the snorting, contemptuous person; the individual who is forever bored to death, who is languidly blasé. There is the snob; the "high-hat"; the I-am-holier-than-thou. There is the class-conscious person; the race-fanatic; the religious sectarian; the booster of America-for-Americans. There is the pathetic, drooping, nobody-loves-me type; the doleful hypochondriac. There are the persecuted, the self-pitying, and self-excusing types. There are the morbidly egoistic, the self-righteous, smug, complacent, stand-pat. There is the exquisitely self-congratulatory type:

"And everyone will say  
As he walks his flowery way,  
Oh what a singularly pure young man,  
This pure young man must be."

The reader can find dozens of other examples. If he pursues the analysis, he will doubtless agree that most distressing, life-defeating qualities are found among such persons as these who center in themselves, and who, because of their predominantly avoiding reactions, are properly to be called contractives.

*Expansives*

The basic factor in expansiveness is the wish for union. It therefore fundamentally involves a movement outwards, away from, never towards the ego. The true lover—whether of mate, or child, or parent or pupil or idea—is an expansive. He does not go out to absorb into himself and for himself. He goes out to achieve union. His interest is as fundamentally in the other as in himself.

The sympathetic person is an expansive. Etymologically, he “suffers with.” He can place himself outside of himself and feel intensely in a situation not his own. The generous person is an expansive. Etymologically, he is “of noble birth.” He is therefore open-handed. There is nothing mean, contractive, shut-in about him. Like a noble of old, his life is rich, broad-acred; he gives freely of his riches. The magnanimous person likewise is of this type. Etymologically he is “great of spirit.” There is nothing petty about him. He takes large views, holds no grudges, has no small animosities. His whole essential movement is outward, expansive.

The person who learns really to admire is, in that respect, an expansive. Here the prefix “ad” is significant. The movement is *toward* the other person or thing. To admire a piece of music, a picture, a view, is to pass out of one’s self-enclosedness and to yield oneself, in a measure, to what one admires.

The mind that is predominantly inquiring is expansive. It does not hold itself fixed in dogma or in absolute values. It presses out to the still unknown, aiming to extend the area of its intelligent comprehension.

The hopeful person, as against the discouraged and de-

spairing person, is of the expansive type. Instead of shrinking from what the future holds, he reaches out to it, is eager to welcome it. In the same manner, the person who has the encouraging habit of mind is expansive. He sees possibilities, opens up pathways, helps the other person to carry on.

Persons who are playful by nature are expansive. How different they are from the morose soul who sits glumly in his corner refusing to join in! Play means give and take, carrying on a common enterprise that is pleasurable to all. More than that it means doing something out of the surplus abundance of one's energy. Play is not played because it is "useful." It serves no utilitarian end. It is the pouring out, so to speak, of our reserve energies into a form of activity that is in itself wholly pleasurable and that presupposes the completest openness and generous response to fellow players. If one does not give this generous response, one is not a player, but a kill-joy.

Finally, the humorous person is also an expansive. We shall later discuss humor in greater detail; for it is perhaps as fundamental as any quality to wholesome mental and emotional expansiveness. It will suffice here to point out that the person contracted within himself, single-eyed to his own miseries or his own egoism, is never humorous. Humor requires a certain relaxedness of mind, a certain kindly openness to grotesqueries, either in oneself or in one's environment. Presupposing as it does a sense of proportion, humor is never found in a person who takes himself as seriously as does the typical contractive. And yet humor, also, as we shall later see, may have its contractive aspect.

*Sharpening the Types*

It is not enough, however, to call people contractive or expansive. Life is not as simple as that. They may be contractive in a certain aspect of their life and expansive in other aspects. The measure of their effectiveness lies in the extent to which the expansive type of reaction is present in all the various aspects of life.

Let us take, for example, the power to perceive. The typically contractive perceiver sees everything around him quite superficially. All persons look alike to him: they are just people. Houses are houses; trees, trees. He has no curiosity pressing him to pass beyond the obvious appearances of things and note fine distinctions—as, for example, the generous slope of this roof and the pinched inadequacy of that other, the intelligent look around one person's eyes and the sensual look around another's. He lives, therefore, within a simple world of stereotyped images. His is the common-place, imitative, banal, and inevitably provincial mind.

Contrast with him the expansive perceiver, who looks keenly at the many things in his world. He is always beholding something more in them than others do.

"Behind the silent doorways  
That flank the silent street  
The mysteries of life are hid."

He notes differences—lights and shades, nuances—captures significances. He has the exploring mind of the discoverer, or the inventor, or the artist.

Let us take, again, the power to feel. The contractive

feeler is wrapped up in himself and in his own aches and pains. If he is kind, it is in the inverted fashion of the Golden Rule: he does unto others as he would have others do unto him. Or he is that nuisance, the person who is kind in a way pleasing to himself and that yields him a sense of his own importance.

“If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am;  
 I’m a genuine philanthropist, all other kinds are sham.  
 Each little fault of temper and each soc-i-al defect  
 In my erring fellow creatures I endeavor to correct.  
 To all their little weaknesses I open people’s eyes  
 And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise.  
 I love my fellow creatures, I do all the good I can,  
 Yet everybody says I am a disagreeable man.”

Contrast with him the expansive feeler who is genuinely interested in other people, pays little attention to his own aches and pains, scarcely refers to himself, is so busy thinking about outside interests that he never broods about himself. He does unto others as he feels they, in their own best interest, would like to be done to—which is the expansive reading of the Golden Rule. In his kindness he tries to find out what will genuinely please others, not merely himself.

Now it is obvious that our contractive perceiver with his provincial, commonplace mind, may, at the same time, be, in a degree, an expansive, warm-hearted feeler; while our narrowly contracted feeler—cold-blooded, uninterested in his fellows—may be an expansive perceiver, of the scientific or inventive type. Thus one may be expansive in one aspect of one’s life and contractive in the other. Apparently the adequate type will be that kind of person who is expansive in both perception and feeling.

The contractive thinker—to pass to the third aspect—avoids the act of thinking as much as possible. He uses stereotyped phrases—*clichés*; repeats the opinions of his fellows. He may even furiously oppose a new thought. Sometimes he seems to be thinking, but he is simply learning facts, storing them up in his memory. “Ask me another,” he may challengingly say; and he will make the reply found at the end of the book.

Contrast the expansive thinker. He tackles problems, tries to get to the bottom of them, thinks for himself. His speaking has a tang of originality: phrases are his own, the opinions his own. Nor does he simply store up his thoughts in his own mind. He is interested in passing his thoughts on, not merely in displaying himself. He wishes to test them out and get them to function. Also—and here he is most sharply distinguished from the contractive thinker—he is eager to receive, to modify his own thoughts by means of what others may contribute.

### *Two Pictures*

Let us make our analysis concrete through the pictures of two personalities. The reader himself has no doubt met many examples of each type.

The first is a contractive. In his business he is acquisitive, in extreme cases a miser, drawing everything to himself. He likes to work by himself and for himself. He is suspicious of new ways of doing things. He gives few or no confidences, is chary of seeking or giving coöperation. He is proud of standing alone, makes a virtue of his rugged individualism, which he promulgates as a life-philosophy for everyone, not knowing that he is rationalizing his own con-

tractiveness. In his married life he is a stay-at-home and demands the same of his wife. He cares a great deal for his children, doubtless because they are his. He alternately over-indulges and dominates them, also because they are his. He cares little and does nothing for other children. He has no impersonal interest whatever in public affairs.

The other picture is of an expansive. His business, to him, is chiefly a means whereby he can function in a manly, interesting, and worthwhile way. He takes pride, not in his accumulations, but in those of his achievements which have really pushed things ahead in his world. He welcomes cooperation, is eager for new ideas, inventive, generous in give-and-take. He is serviceable not because it is demanded of him as a "duty," but because he honestly enjoys contributing to the welfare of the world. The doors of his home are wide open to people and ideas. He is happy that his wife has interests and a mind of her own. He loves his children; but he neither indulges them nor dominates them. He places himself at their point of view and rears them with the intelligence that will bring them to affectionate, resourceful maturity. He is widely interested in human affairs. Life, for him, is a joining in with the fine human adventure.

### *Pseudo-Expansives*

One final warning before we close this chapter. There are folk who look expansive and who act expansively, but who are really rather hopelessly contractive. In sexual relations, for example, there is the person who loves—passionately at times—but only possessively. He is the lover who draws the beloved entirely to himself; who in no sense goes out to the other in generous understanding, in no way identifies



himself with that other's interest and viewpoint. And there is also the lover, already described, who is simply in love with love, who does not pass beyond the mere satisfaction of his own sex-feelings. In both of these cases there is, of course, a slight expansiveness. Possessive and erotic lovers do interest themselves in those they love, but chiefly for the purpose of possessive gratification.

Then there is the person who is in love with his own ideas. He pours them out. He seems to be giving of himself freely and generously; but all he does is to hear the echo of himself in his own words.

The reader will be able to find many more examples of people who seem to be expansive but who are in reality contractive.

### *The Issue*

From the foregoing analysis it would seem to be apparent that individual life is worthwhile in proportion as its movements are expansive.

The task of building up expansive reactions in the child is obviously the primary concern of parents. Nothing should be more carefully watched for, nothing more intelligently guarded against than the appearance in the child of contractive reactions—seclusiveness, timidity, sulks, rages, ego-inflation. It is likewise a most important concern of teachers. Is the school or the college accentuating the contractive reactions—individual acquisitiveness, "getting by," delight in beating others; or is it developing a broad, vigorous expansiveness in thought, feeling and action?

It should be the primary concern of the business man. Does he regard his business as a means of functioning

broadly, generously, contributively, or simply as a means of drawing power and gratification to himself? His bigness or his littleness—his ability to work towards an expanding future and a civilization increasingly humanized—depends largely upon the degree to which he has built the expansive attitude into his personality.

And of course it must be the primary concern of the professional man. Is he to remain fixated at the stage of his erstwhile professional training or to keep moving forward? Is he to be narrowly and dogmatically enclosed within a little area of achieved professional tricks, or alert to the outreaching trends of his profession? Is he to remain in satisfied ignorance of regions outside of his specialty, or is he to be broadly human, learning from all fields and bringing to his own specialty the wisdom that comes from mentally travelling far? If the reader will call to mind the professional men he knows—the physicians, dentists, architects, lawyers, teachers—he will have little difficulty in saying: "This person is a small man, because he is contractive; this person is big in his profession because he reaches out expansively."

It should also be a primary concern of the housewife. Does she regard her housewifely function narrowly, holding herself to a kind of isolated inefficiency; or does she think in terms of wider relationships, linking her household with all the forces in the community which can give it both an added effectiveness and significance?

And of course it should also be the primary concern of the citizen. Has he the mind of a villager? Is he satisfied with the *status quo*? Does he stone the prophets? Or is he interested in the world, in the march of mankind to new and

more adequate goals, hopeful of all honest, forward-looking ideas and enterprises?

Will the reader subject the foregoing ideas to a critical testing? How much, actually, of what he considers wholesome in himself is of this pattern of expansiveness? Is there anything contractive in him that is really fine?

As to his fears and rages—does he find any that are expansive, as when he fears for the welfare of his beloved, or rages at the stupidity of war, or at the cruelty of exploitation? Why does he regard these as expansive rather than contractive?

Is there any expansiveness in him which is altogether too expansive, as when he is so generous that he is unfair to his own family, or so eager in his studiousness that he wrecks his own health? Are there motives and behaviors which look expansive but are really more or less subtly contractive.

Watching his friends or acquaintances, will he classify them as predominantly the one type or the other? Examining them more closely, can he detect at what particular point of behavior the chief defect in their personality lies? Can he suggest how the particular contractiveness might be changed into a wholesome expansiveness?

Does he find this, on the whole, a fruitful way of estimating people? If he is a novelist, does it give him an enlightening approach to human nature? If a parent or teacher, does it give him an effective point of appraisal? Finally, does it cast any real light upon himself?

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ORGANIC PATTERN

#### Basic Processes of the Body-Mind

We have an ancient bad habit, carried over from earliest times. It is the bad habit of thinking of the body as one thing and the mind as quite another. But no one has ever yet discovered a mind in complete separation from a body. Hence there is no empirical ground whatever for believing the two to be independent entities. As for metaphysical reasons for so believing, they are now generally discarded among philosophers. We always find, in brief, a body-mind. Indeed, so integrated is the functioning of this body-mind that a disability in one of its aspects—in a thyroid gland, let us say, or in the sex hormones—will give evidence of itself in other phases of the living unity, in a high excitability or a deep depression. Or, vice versa, a disability in a so-called mental part of us—a protracted worry, or a disappointment—will show its effect in the blood circulation, the action of the liver and kidneys, the movements of the gastric fluids, etc. Body-mind, in short, is a unity which we do ill to break up into two independent parts.

This being true, there is every reason to believe that there are certain fundamental processes which belong to the entire body-mind unity. If we find them in the so-called bodily phase of that unity, we shall expect to find them also in the so-called mental phase. Now the study of the bodily phase

has already made us familiar with three such basic processes. In the first place, there is *intake*—of various life-sustaining material. In the second place, there is *transformation*—of the intaken material into living tissue. In the third place, there is *elimination*—of the materials which are not adapted to the up-building process, and which, if retained, would act as poisons.

If, now, we assert that these three processes of intake, transformation and elimination are to be found likewise in the mental life, some readers may shake warning heads. "Reasoning by analogy," they will object. "You have no right," they will say, "to carry over bodily processes into the working of the mind." But they will make the objection only if they are still in the grip of that ancient bad habit. They will then be thinking of *a* body with its independent processes, and of *a* mind with its quite different independent processes. If, however, they will cast out this dualism and will think of the body-mind as a unified organism—as one total life, in short—they will be prepared to find that the identical processes are present throughout this living unity.

### *Intake*

In the first place, what does this living, body-mind unity need to take in in order to keep alive and grow? Obviously, it needs a number of things. First, and most indispensably, it needs to take in air, sunshine and food. If one or all of these are seriously lacking, there will be not only a famished body but a meagre mind. But the body-mind needs more. It needs to take in information of various sorts, lest it remain a dumb creature. And it requires still more. It might have been simply a logic-machine, or a kind of intellectual

robot. But it is not; and because it is not, this body-mind needs affection. If it lacks affection, it will starve, precisely as it starves for lack of food.

The basic requirements of body-mind, we have said, are air, sunshine and food. In these highly urbanized days we begin to be keenly conscious of deprivations in the matter of air and sunshine. The dark, airless apartments and sunless factories of our crowded cities, are a sad commentary upon our civilization. Among other hopeful signs, however, is the fact that we are beginning to appreciate the regenerative effect of out-of-door life. This is of profounder psychological significance than is usually supposed. Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls, hiking clubs, golf clubs, tennis clubs are an indication that the culture which taught despising of the body and which provided so fertile a soil for the warping industrialism of the nineteenth century, is losing its power. We are no longer ashamed to love the beauty of wholesome bodily life. As this new Hellenism takes firmer root, we may rightly expect that the human ugliness now surrounding us, which undoubtedly betokens unlovely and contractive lives, will increasingly disappear.

The individual who has lived through a winter of gray skies and chilling fog knows the depression of spirit that ensues, and then the sudden lift, the gaiety which takes possession of him when the spring sun begins to warm up the earth. Where there is no sun to be had, we can now substitute a periodic bath in the ultra-violet rays that are as indispensable as air and food.

Happily we are emerging out of that curious, immodest modesty when woman was a perambulating clothes-closet and man a monstrosity in black frock and stove-pipe hat. In those days we defied the sun. "Touch us if you can!" Now-a-

days people are not afraid to strip themselves of a goodly portion of their clothes and bare their skin to the sun's rays.

But to get air and sun really *into* our systems—body and mind—we know that we must bestir ourselves, so that the blood-stream may carry these life-sustaining elements to the farthest corners of the organism. It is necessary to get out into the open and move about with commendable briskness. One calls to mind the boys and girls in Switzerland or Germany's Black Forest, in short trousers, shirts and sandals, with rucksacks on their backs, swinging lustily down the road in the early morning sunshine. Not one of these young people, one may venture to believe, is turned-in, seclusive, tied up in a hard knot. They seem to have cast off all the sombre clutter and concealment of our mummified civilization. Their young minds and bodies, open to the sun and air, are laying up a store of psychological good health for a long time to come.

### *Food*

Some day we shall know much more about the effect of food upon this body-mind of ours, upon what we call our personality. Observe your fellow-diner in a restaurant or in a Pullman dining car. Does it not seem that wrong diet may have a great deal to do with unwholesome attitudes? Are spotted faces, dull eyes, baggy wrinkles, pendulous pouches the sole evils that result from wrong eating habits? The reader, I am sure, has now and then suffered from a bilious attack. He knows that while in that condition his attitude toward the world and toward his fellows is far from friendly. A badly fed or over-fed organism is inevitably an ugly organism—ugly psychologically as well as

physically. It is probably true, then, that wrong feeding may have much to do with the building up of stuffy, ill-natured, contractive individuals, and that right feeding may be the simplest and directest of all routes to the attainment of the lightness and facility and generous outlook which betoken a thoroughly wholesome and acceptable body-mind.

### *Information*

In addition to air, sunshine and food, there must obviously be an intake of information. To that end we build schools and colleges. We print books and newspapers, broadcast speeches, flash newsreels on the screen. Minds, in other words, must be fed as truly as digestive tracts. This is all so obvious that we ought perhaps to pass it over with only a mention. And yet I have two pictures in mind which insist upon being shared. One is that of a baby in a high-chair with a mother standing over it, trying, with irritation, and a good deal of unsuccess, to crowd food into its small system. The mother pushes in the mush with a spoon; the baby gives a lusty blow, and out comes the mush. That baby does not want the mush; but the young mother, feeling that the hour for mush has come, takes spoon in hand, and goes to it. The other picture is that of a school-room of boys and girls. The teacher, annoyed but conscientious to the last, is trying to crowd into those young brains certain apparently indispensable pieces of information: how to compute, let us say, the cubic contents of two and five-sevenths gallons of vinegar. The reader can easily complete the picture, for he has doubtless been a star actor in some such scene many times himself. He probably cared not a whit for the two and five-sevenths gallons of vinegar. But, by the time he was



ten or thereabouts, he was too well tamed to give the baby's lusty blow; he only looked bored and worried, tried to remember, gave it up, scrawled pictures on the margins of his books and hated school with all the vigorous hatred of his young soul.

Perhaps the reader went to college wanting to study biology. But first, said the pundits, he must take English Literature. So he scrawled more pen pictures while an unenthusiastic instructor told him about Chaucer, Fletcher, Southey, Pope and a number of other worthies who seemed to have lived chiefly for the purpose of being studied for examinations. And the pundits told him that he had to "take" a good many other things—like pills—in the taking of which he continued to increase his graphic skill and learned how to listen with one ear and go wool-gathering with the other.

What the mush-ladling mother should know, apparently, and what the information-ladling college professors should know is the simple old adage that you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink. If you could speak to the horse persuasively and get him to *want* to drink, well and good.

Most of our schools and colleges are operated upon the principle that because *we*—the adults—want information ladled into our boys and girls, the boys and girls ought gratefully to wish to be ladled into. All that, of course, is the most erroneous psychology. Besides, it gives these children of ours indigestion. When we have ladled in the highly intellectual mushes, spinaches, asparaguses, and the rest, the victims are so stuffed that never again in all their lives will they come within hailing distance of a book or an idea.

Schools should, of course, arrange their work in terms

of the psychological or interest-ages of their pupils. To require interests at seven that do not naturally come until fourteen or later, makes both for needless suffering and for educational futility.

Knowledge that expands us can never be knowledge that is stuffed in. It must be knowledge that we *want*, that we ourselves go seeking, that we sweat and toil for precisely because we will not for the life of us go without it. Better no schools at all than schools which so cram us to the bursting point that we have no wish nor spirit thereafter to go seeking on our own. We are then sated children; sated adults.

### *Towards a Way Out*

This book is not a treatise on education. Nevertheless education can play so crucial a part in the building up of an expansive life that we must stop long enough to consider what a wholesome psychological point of view would require.

First it would require a considerable self-restraint on the part of older folk. Many of us are altogether too impatient in our educational zeal for our children, although we know full well—we often tell them so, as if it were a good joke—that most of the information crowded into them will be forgotten. This attitude of impatience has largely arisen out of the belief that childhood and youth are the only periods for learning and that the adult is incapable of learning. Hence the hope that enough subject-matter will be got into the child to last over into those later years when his mind will retire from the juvenile business of getting educated. What a delight, in those later years, if he can then remember that

King Henry the Something kissed someone or other, who, at that precise moment should not have been kissed; and that in thirteen hundred and something Philip of Arethusa waged war against his cousin, Archibald of Montezuma! How he will then thank his good teachers for having compelled him, in his youthful years, to hold those terribly important facts in his rebellious head!

But of course he will not thank them. The kiss he may remember, but Arethusa and the rest he will forget—and be rather proud of forgetting. And such, in general, is the upshot of this so-called education, for which, with a kind of naïve religious ardor, we spend our millions.

Perhaps the new insight we are beginning to acquire with regard to the relation of learning to age-periods will change much of our education. The adult, we find, is not only just as capable of learning as the child; *he is more capable*. As a matter of fact if we should postpone most of the subjects which children are forced to learn—such as mathematically papering interminable walls and carpeting endless floors, memorizing historical dates, etc., we should find that they would learn all these things much more quickly as adults. Because they see the value of what they want to learn, and because they are in a position to put it into effective use, adults hold what they learn much more intelligently in mind.

### *Is There Hope for Adults?*

A number of significant experiments have recently been carried on by Professor Thorndike, of Teachers College, New York. Two age-groups were selected, one averaging around twenty-two, and the other around forty-two. The first problem turned on the question of skills. Was a forty-

two-year-old still flexible enough to acquire a new skill? Thorndike assigned to both groups the task of learning to write with the left hand. He found that the older persons learned with only a little less facility than the younger.

The next problem turned on the question of mastering a new idea-system. Could an older person master a new subject-matter? Both groups were set to learning Esperanto, which is a language constructed wholly on logical lines. Here, too, the same results were revealed. The older persons learned with only a slightly diminished facility. But they learned.

One profoundly significant outcome of the experiment was the discovery that the adults of both groups learned the new muscular coördination in a relatively few score hours, whereas in childhood the same learning of a new muscular coördination—as in learning to write—required about two years. Thus adults not only could learn, but they could learn faster than children.<sup>1</sup> Out, therefore, went the doleful ancient platitude about old dogs not being able to learn new tricks.

### *What It Will Do to Us*

Once the results of experiments like these become thoroughly understood, they will probably begin to effect considerable modifications in our educational procedures. First of all, no doubt, they will ease up the tension of our pedagogical impatience. The child-years are not the only years of learning. In fact, in several respects, the child has not

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing is the gist of an address delivered by Professor Thorndike at the annual Conference of the American Association for Adult Education at Cleveland, Ohio, in May, 1927. The published accounts of the experiments were not then at hand.

yet the associative richness of experience which makes learning swift and sure and translates it at once into significant functioning. "Experience proves that the same amount of information, which it takes the half-grown youth—dozing on the school forms—three to five years to learn, can be acquired by adults, who are keen on learning *and who have done practical work*, in the space of three to five months." <sup>1</sup>

It will doubtless soon be seen that there is no need for all this pedagogical hurry and scurry in the young years of life, this cramming in of unwished-for information. *A great deal of what clutters and crowds the curriculum of the schools can therefore be bodily removed.* The child can be given breathing space, be permitted to grow up with some degree of pleasure in the learning process. There will be time, in short, for him to pursue the information which he himself wants. If he is bent upon building ships, there will be no teacher at his back, no worried parents to make him learn things of which he cannot see the sense, but there will be someone who will help him build ships.

Once the unwholesome pressure is off, the child will be able to function with the only kind of knowledge that makes for psychological expansiveness—the knowledge *which keeps luring him on.* A mind crowded with a heterogeneous array of facts is not necessarily an expanded mind. It may, on the contrary, be a mind petty, stupid, uncomprehending, wrapped up in the pride of its own futile miscellaneousness. The only knowledge which is really expanding in its effect is that which draws us on from stage to stage. When the boy starts to build his radio, he is being drawn on from knowledge to knowledge. When a group of children are writing a

<sup>1</sup> *The Folk High Schools of Denmark*, by Begtrup, Lund & Manniche, p. 132. The italics are mine.

play, or are out on a hunt for something they want to know, they, too, are being drawn on from knowledge to knowledge. The most pertinent question which a teacher of the newer education will ask himself is: are my students dealing with knowledge which they want to get and which really draws them on? If the answer is in the negative he will be swift to correct the unwholesome pedagogical situation.

The gist of the whole matter, I think, lies in the foregoing. Children must, indeed, take in information. But, in the first place, they must want to take it in or somehow be induced really to want it. In the second place, it must be such information as lures them on. Some day we shall be wise enough to make these two requirements the basis of all education. Then education will be a powerful factor in the building up of expansive personalities, as contrasted with most of the education of the present, which, as often as not, by the very process of over-feeding and wrong feeding, builds up contractive personalities who, having been trained to regard education as something disagreeable, push it off in the adult days as something too boresome to be tolerated.

Professor Cassius Keyser, in one of his recent books, asked by what sign one could detect an educated person. His own answer was simple and rather surprising. He did not say: we know an educated person by the amount of his knowledge, or by his college degrees, or by the light of intelligence in his eyes. An educated person, according to Keyser, was one who possessed a certain intellectual habit. If he read nothing but what was easy, or kept himself strictly to subjects with which he was already familiar, no matter what the quantity of his information, he would not be an educated person. A truly educated person would be one who

was in the constant habit of reading books that had to be thought over, struggled over, and that, when mastered, added something to what one already possessed.

One may disagree with this as a completely satisfying answer, but the central point of it seems to be of value. The educated man is one who feels himself to be unfinished, who *wants* therefore to go on from mastery to mastery. Thus he is one who builds up a mental tissue that is forever growing and forever vigorously wholesome in its growth. "Culture," writes Whitehead,<sup>1</sup> "is activity of thought, a receptiveness to beauty, and humane feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth."

All this points to the intake of knowledge as something quite different from a mere ladling in. It points to a vigorous *reaching out to take in*.

### *The Emotional Life*

We have noted the need for air, sunshine, food and knowledge. There is yet another essential to the expansive life. "Children feed on love," writes D'Albe,<sup>2</sup> "as they do on fresh air." The case books of our juvenile courts and child-clinics are full of instances of children literally starved for affection.<sup>3</sup> What happens in starvation? Among other things, poisons are generated within the organism. This is exactly what happens in the case of children starving for affection. They develop sulkiness, suspicion, meanness, lying, thievery. When, for some misdemeanor or other, they are brought before the bar of justice, they are ostensibly

<sup>1</sup> *The Organization of Thought*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Quo Vadimus*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> See the pamphlets issued by the Judge Baker Foundation, Boston, Mass.

“bad” children. But most of us who know anything at all about psychological processes, know that they are not bad, in the sense of being wilfully vicious children; they are affectionally undernourished. In most cases, when such children are wisely placed in an environment where they receive a normal amount of affection, the entire life-pattern changes. Sulkiness gives way to cheerful response; lying and thievery to honesty; selfish seclusiveness and downright maliciousness to affectionate coöperation. In brief, these little furtive contractives, through the influence of an atmosphere of affection may become joyous expansives.

Love—sentimental though this may sound—is like sunshine: it tends to open up, to unfold the organism. That is why the unloved life in adulthood is so often itself unloving. It builds a shell around itself—of bitterness or suspicion or despair. It shrinks, contracts, withdraws.

This does not preclude the fact that affection can be showered upon a child unwisely, so that the over-loved child may become a detestable, self-centered contractive. But for this, of course, it is not the love that is to blame, but the unwisdom. Even sunshine can burn and blister.

### *Biography*

In the impressionable years of life we bring to the child almost everything that can be brought except the most vitalizing thing of all—the contact with great personalities. Perhaps it is best so. The schools seem to have a way of investing many of the things they touch with weariness and distaste. In far too many cases, if Shakespeare is taught, he is hated; if the adventurous progress of mankind is taught as history, it is hated. Perhaps it is best, then, that great



biography has not yet been taught. Where, indeed, one sublime life is taught—as in the Sunday School—the children yawn and scuffle their feet.

But what a loss is there! Let the boy, uncompelled, get hold of a life of Livingstone, or of Dr. Grenfell, or of Captain Scott, and see if his blood is not set coursing the faster. The great qualities of courage, endurance, high-mindedness, dogged research—expansive qualities all—are pale moral abstractions when talked about simply as qualities. But seen in a vital human being, all the fine life in us leaps in response and is stimulated to a like activity.

The psychological factor here involved is evident. In a biography—as in a living human being—we see a quality in its “total configuration,” as the *Gestalt* psychologists would say. We do not take courage or endurance or good sportsmanship apart from the life-situation and talk about it in its abstract separateness. In biography, we see life dynamically whole; and when that life is noble, the nobility that is in us is roused to respond.

Hence we have in biography incomparable psychological resources for building up the kind of expansive personality we desire to develop. If the schools cannot offer these resources, parents can. And if we are adults casting about for tonics which will help build up in us strong psychological constitutions, we can do no better than start living with the great ones of the earth. I asked a student of philosophy what he remembered of the actual life-experience of some of the great men he had studied. He hesitated a moment; looked puzzled. “Well,” he said, “all I can remember is that Thales fell into a well and that Socrates had Xantippe for a wife and was finally given poison.” What a commentary upon the teaching!

*Conclusion*

And so we may sum the matter up as far as we have gone. The organism must have food upon which to thrive. It must have, first of all, its earth foods—air, sunshine, and physical nourishment. But it must also have the foods that make it more than a simple creature of the earth: it must have knowledge, affection, and the great exemplars. Let there be a generous assimilation of all of these, and we may rest assured that we build up living tissue strong psychologically as well as physically. If we go into the matter seriously we shall discover, as I have tried to indicate, that much of the feeding we do is bad feeding. As a result we develop indigestions and nauseas and downright starvations that seriously debilitate our psychological life. Hence there is need of a kind of revised dietetics for our body-minds.

Has the reader noted any cases in which either child or grown-up life has suffered because of an environment of physical or mental meagreness? Has he noted any cases in which a change in the environment altered the individual?

Does the reader look with entire satisfaction upon what was done to him in the schools, or in college? Is he satisfied with what is being done to young life now-a-days? Can he suggest more adequate ways of educating individuals?

Has he noted cases in which adults have learned new skills or pursued new mental interests? If adults are to go on learning, what do they need most to learn?

## CHAPTER XII

### EARS THAT HEAR

#### The Psychological Value of Music

If one were to assert that music can be a powerful aid in building up a strong, expansive personality, would one be justified in this assertion? We have Shakespeare's word for it that "the man who hath no music in his soul . . . is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils." Such a man, evidently, is of the contractive type we have described. He is bent on his own dark purposes, is not only unmindful of the welfare of others, but actually meditates them harm. Again, Congreve assures us that

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,  
To soften rocks or bend the knotted oak."

What does all this mean? Does music really have these magic powers? It will be remembered that Plato was so impressed with what music could do to people that he permitted only certain kinds within his ideal republic. The softer modes were to be rigorously excluded. They were too weakening to the fibre of his ideal republicans. Apparently, then, Plato also believed that music could do things to people—profound, transforming things. Perhaps Darwin's words may be more significant for this scientific age. Speaking of the atrophying of the taste for music and poetry, he writes: "The loss of these tastes is a loss of hap-

pinness; and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

What significance does music have in our life—or can it have? The subject is wrapped in fogs of vague thinking. We all hear music; many of us love it; a few hate it; but almost no one is aware of what it is all about and what it does to us. The power music frequently has over men, as in the inspiring strains of the march, should lead us to suspect that it can play a deeply transforming part in our psychological life, a part which, once clearly recognized, might be utilized to high advantage in the building up of expansive personalities.

What is music? According to Jules Combarieu,<sup>1</sup> it is the art of thinking in sounds. But it is different from most thinking. It is a thinking *without verbal concepts*.

What can that mean? How can one think without verbal concepts? Is that not mystical nonsense? And is it not more nonsense to say, as Symonds does, that music "comes speaking the highest wisdom in a language our reason does not understand because it is older and deeper and closer than reason"? If our reason does not understand, how can music in any intelligible sense "speak the highest wisdom"? And does not the whole thing break down into a kind of supernonsense when Surette writes: <sup>2</sup> "This, then, is what we call music: rhythm, melody and harmony arranged into forms of beauty, existing in time. It is without meaning; it is without 'subject'; it is without idea. It creates a world of its own, fictitious, fabulous and irrelevant—a world of sound, evanescent, yet indestructible."

<sup>1</sup> *Music, its Laws and Evolution*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Music and Life*, p. 13.

Let us dwell on those words: "Speaking the highest wisdom," "thinking without concepts," and yet "fictitious, fabulous and irrelevant." Is there any sense in such expressions?

### *Examining the Contradictions*

There is probably less nonsense in these expressions than we might suppose from the apparent contradictions they contain. Returning to Combarieu's statement that music is thinking without concepts, let us consider for a moment what a concept is and does. A concept, if it is a good one, is always specific, precise. "Bread," for example. I say, "Give me a loaf of bread." The concept *points*—to a specific object there on the shelf. Or suppose I am a chemist and say: "Put Na with Cl and you will have salt." Three concepts, each pointing to a specific object.

The more precise a concept, the better it is as a concept. A vague concept ought to be an abomination unto man; but unfortunately it is some men's dear delight. For example, take the recently adopted concept "Bolshevist." No self-respecting thinker would use it except in its exact meaning as applied to persons holding a well-defined political theory; but by the careless thinker it is applied indiscriminately to Russian labor leaders, social idealists, discontented workers, teachers desiring an advance in salary, students who jeer at military drill, advocates of birth control—indeed to anyone who voices an idea which disturbs the user of the epithet. So vague a concept cannot, of course, be an efficient tool of intercourse. As a matter of fact, it is not only a bad tool; it is often a highly dangerous one.

But music induces in us concepts that are vague. Is it

also bad and dangerous? Sometimes a person hearing, let us say, a Beethoven symphony will ask in perplexity: "But what does it mean?" His musical friend may answer cryptically, "It means nothing—and everything." Whereat the seeker after precision may wax angry or sarcastic. "If it means nothing, then why play it? If everything, then why not say it?"

And there precisely is the rub. Nothing can be said by music. And yet far more is said than can be said. The literalist wants to hear cow-bells in his music, the clatter of horses' hoofs, steam whistles and ballyhoos, because they tell him something definite. To the real music-lover these things are anathema because they tell him nothing of the greater things he wishes to know.

### *What Music Does*

Am I now myself talking nonsense? I hope not. Precision is, of course, an essential in life, essential as bread and cheese, hammers and nails. But it is not all-sufficient. Carlyle said of Diderot: "He dwelt all his days on a thin rind of the conscious. The deep, fathomless domain of the Unconscious whereon the other rests and has its meaning was not under any shape surmised by him." Diderot built neat walls around all his meanings. He strove for clearness and distinctness. Each thing should mean what it meant and nothing more. Which was good—as far as it went. But since life goes much farther than this, his neat little squares of meanings seem artificial and barren.

Notice how inevitably we get beyond the clear and the precise. Take a simple phrase. "Open the gate." Conceptually, it means just that and that only: "open the gate."

But I can say it with a growl that comes from between clenched teeth: "Open the gate!" Or I can say it with pleading in my voice: "Open the gate!" The reader may recall this phrase as it appears at the opening of "Pelleas and Melisande." Half spoken, half chanted, it is charged with sudden mystery, with a vague poignancy of hidden significances. Open the gate! Gate into the greater things of life. Gate into liberation, ecstasy, love. Gate into the full maturity of man. Around the precise, literal meaning of the phrase, then, one can build an atmosphere of suggestions and significances that defies precise analysis.

This is what music does with tones. Tones *do* something to meanings. Take the simple, precise words: "My love is like a red, red rose." In their literal meaning, they are exact to a dot. But Schumann makes them sing; and suddenly they are invested with a poignancy and a tenderness that are indescribable. The simple, precise concepts, in short, have been lifted into an atmosphere which bathes them in a thousandfold suggestiveness.

That, I think, is the secret of music. Music takes our otherwise specific concepts and opens them out. It breaks down their tight literalness, liberates them so that they are no longer subject to the metes and bounds of precise thinking.

That, of course, is the weakness of music. But that, as we shall presently see, is also its unique strength.

Take *The Song of India*, for example, or the *Kol Nidre*, quite apart from any words that accompany them, or the *Dead March from Saul*. There are no specific concepts in any one of these. The melody of *The Song of India* does not picture the Taj Mahal, or the Ganges, or the hermit saints of the Upanishads. It pictures nothing at all. It tells nothing

at all. What it gives—but what does it give? I know that, so far as I myself am concerned, *The Song of India* is wistfulness, yearning, a sadness of other worlds, a poignant love that is mystery, loss, defeat, triumph. . . . These weave in and out of each other. They are there and they are not there. I cannot hold them, analyze them, put my finger on them: "Stop! that particular interval means hope eternal." I may see images, or I may not see them. I may wish to weep, or I may wish to laugh with exultation. And if I ache with the deep sadness of it all, I do not know for what particular thing I ache.

Thus this music, to the hearer, is conceptually formless, outsoaring all precisenesses. And yet, although it is without the neat sign-posts of our finite meanings, it has a meaning so great, so indescribable that it seems—is this an illusion?—to speak a wisdom which we are forever unable to form in words.

Or take the *Kol Nidre*, that majestic hymn of the Hebrew people. Again, I do not see the toiling slaves in Egypt, the birth of the deliverer, the miraculous night of the Passover, the escape, the long pilgrimage. Some may see these pictures, or other pictures. To me *Kol Nidre* is suffering. It is the cry of the oppressed, it is sublime faith, it is triumph. It is humility before the Something greater than ourselves.

Or take the *Dead March from Saul*. Sorrow, deep rending sorrow, but the sorrow that is sublimely one with the universe, that lifts its heart, that holds back its tears, that remembers the beauty and the sacredness of the beloved who has passed away.

In each of these cases the music has done to us something profoundly transforming. It has, I think, liberated us from the specific. In so doing, it has made us feel the sheer emo-



tions themselves. It has, for example, given us not *a* sorrow, but *sorrow itself*—sorrow as it is everywhere—sorrow as it is with the high and the low—sorrow to-day, yesterday and to-morrow—the essence of sorrow. It has given us not a definite, specific yearning that belongs to you or to me, but yearning itself—the sheer essence of the deep longing that always has been and always will be in the hearts of men.

Is it not possible that life may, indeed, be unduly specific? It is this thing now, then that, then that, and then again that. One thing after another, a bewildering succession. But through all the distracting multiplicity of our separate experiences, does there not run a something which is common to all ages and all men? When we touch that common something, we are suddenly made greater than our single selves. We live into the common life, share the common experience. Our individual finiteness, in a measure, is swept into the infinite. This music can do for us; and in so doing it makes for the expansion of our personalities.

### *A Doubt*

“But jazz is music,” some readers will now say, with eyebrows raised. “Does all this eloquence apply to jazz? If so, we beg to be excused.”

Music, we have said, liberates us from the specific. Well, even jazz does that in so far as it is music. Jazz, too, expresses sheer feeling that is common to us all. But what does jazz do to us that the *Kol Nidre* and *The Song of India* do not do?

There is a difference in feelings; and it is this difference, no doubt, which must forever be the basis of our judgments in evaluating music. I here put aside any reference whatever

to the technical excellences or deficiencies of music, and I confine myself wholly to what music is to the listener.

Without going into elaborate ethical and social analyses, we do know that some feelings are regarded as more admirable, more humanly excellent than others. The fury of angry fight is a feeling common to us all. We do not altogether admire it. Yet there can be music which gives us the fury of fight in its essence and rouses that dark fury in us. Sex feelings are common to us all. There can be music which stimulates these feelings and which rouses everything that is primitively sexual in us.

Jazz is the passion of movement, excitement, abandon, sex. It is that passion sheer. Plato meant that we, as wise persons, must know what music really does to us, and knowing that, must make our choice of the feelings we actually wish to have roused.

We may, then, when we think of hate-music and rage-music, be prepared to reverse the words of Symonds. Music comes speaking, at times, not the highest wisdom, but some of our deepest follies. And it speaks them in a language far more powerful than reason.

We need not, in other words, be uncritical enthusiasts. We can make distinctions. We can take the music that touches the greatest human emotions and leave aside that which expresses only the lower levels of feeling.

### *Music Sister to Science*

Music, we have said, liberates us from the specific. That is one reason why it is so refreshing. Illness is fundamentally a condition of intense concentration upon oneself, upon one's specific bodily misfortune. One builds a tight fence around

the misfortune, and within that minute enclosure, one sits intent upon one's woe. Then music comes; and the fence suddenly dissolves away. For a few moments, one forgets. One is out, away, infinitely farther than miles can measure or thoughts estimate. And then one comes back to one's woe with a sudden remembrance, and with a sigh that is at once a deeper, wholesomer breathing and a regret that one must come back.

This liberation from the specific is not only refreshing, but it is of fundamental moment in the building up of the kind of expansive personality in which we are here interested.

There are two kinds of universality which every individual must achieve if he is to be greatly human—the universality of thought and the universality of emotion. Let us consider the second. When one feels only a *specific* emotion in a *specific* situation, one is like the person who can see only particular chairs and tables and lamps and automobiles and can detect no great law of nature running through them all. Newton detected the law of gravitation, and in so doing, raised his power of thought—ours with it—above the mere multitudinousness and opacity of separate things.

The same, in like manner—although this is little understood—may occur in the emotional life. I have my own particular sorrows, loves, delights; and you have yours. But sorrow, gladness, yearning, hope, love, belong to all of us, in all times and in all places. Music is the only means whereby we feel these emotions in their universality.

Music, in this respect, is sister to science. It has the universalizing effect the scientific idea has. But it does more: it is the universalizer of the emotional life. It expands the emotional life of each of us beyond the particularity of

specific situations. Because science cannot do this, science, great as it is, is never all-sufficient. This was doubtless what Darwin had in mind when he felt that the loss of a taste for music might be injurious to the intellect and the moral character by "enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

### *We Find a Clue*

But emotion, of course, is never simply and solely emotion. Emotion is always tied up with something which has significance—a person, a situation, an event. Hence just to have emotion pure is a contradiction in terms. When, then, music sweeps us into this universality of emotion—gladness or love or courage—it rouses in us all kinds of thoughts that come floating out of our experience and imagination. If we examine ourselves carefully while we listen to music, we shall note that many of these thoughts are memories—transformed, glorified, released. They come out of the unconscious or half-conscious depths of us, called forth by the liberating emotions.

And now we see why Shakespeare's lines are true. The man without music has not this that penetrates into the depths of himself, this that taps the deeper springs of his personality. He is therefore Carlyle's man, who lives always on the rind. He is "thin." He has no emotional undertones and overtones, no atmosphere. He calls a spade a spade and in doing so thinks himself wondrous wise.

To liberate us from the specific, to stir the unconscious depths of us, to make us therefore at once broader and deeper—this is what music does to those who care for it. Since this is so, we may be certain that the individual, from the very beginning of his life, should have music. At the

present time, music is a step-child of education. It is still admitted for the most part grudgingly, as a kind of superfluity. A little singing, yes—usually badly done; then back to the real business of life.

Some day we shall doubtless be wiser. We shall recognize in music something as essential to life as science and the practical arts. We shall recognize that it does to us what these cannot do. We shall raise it into a major importance.

### *Music and Bodily Response*

We must, however, refer to a theory of music which suggests other reasons why music is powerful in the building up of a certain expansiveness of personality. This other theory is psycho-physical. It is briefly summarized by Dr. Daniel Gregory Mason:<sup>1</sup>

“First, when we are elated and full of energy, as for instance on a fine spring morning, we have an impulse to leap and jump. Of course, not wishing to make spectacles of ourselves, we resist this impulse; but that it is a natural and universal one we may see in children and in savages, who are less cowed than we are by ideals of propriety. Similarly when we are sad we have an impulse to cry out or moan, which we also suppress. Second, such natural impulses as these to the physical expression of feelings, when they are allowed free sway, immensely intensify the original feelings. . . . Third and last, the two great constituent elements of all music—dance and song—are nothing but systematizations of these primitive impulses to leaping and jumping on the one hand, and to crying and moaning on the

<sup>1</sup> *Ears to Hear: A Guide for Music Lovers*, p. 15. American Library Association.

other. When we hear a strongly rhythmic march, even if propriety keeps us sedately in our seats, we often cannot keep our feet from tapping or our heads from bobbing; and whether or not we imitate the physical motion, we feel the appropriate emotional state, which we then say music 'expresses.' So when we listen to the sighing phrases of the *Volga boatmen's song*, we want to sigh with them; sometimes the impulse to sing is so strong that as we listen to a deeply eloquent tune we may feel our throat muscles tighten; and again we say that music 'expresses' the grief thus aroused in us by sympathy."

It is obvious then, on this theory, that music stirs us out of ourselves. It is *homeogenic* in effect, it begets its like. The individual, therefore, is pulled out of his locked-up-tightness. He is made to dance or sing or weep or sigh *with something else* that dances or sings or weeps or sighs. He is made to join in. Thus the movement induced in him is essentially expansive, sympathetic, outward.

### *Avoiding a Danger*

"Interesting and plausible as this theory is," continues Dr. Mason, however, "it is interesting above all perhaps for its failure to account for the immense differences between what the same piece of music will express to two people. Granted that a march expresses vigor through suggesting vigorous bodily movement; that a funeral march suggests slower, heavier, wearier movement, and so sadder feelings; that a waltz with its more graceful movement, has a more pensive and languorous charm; that a song melody like the *Volga boatmen's song* is sighing and grievous, while one like Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* is lilting and joyful. Grant

all this, and the question still remains why, from a hearing of any of these pieces, A's emotional experience may be so rich, and B's so paltry and insignificant.

"The answer must be, I think, that while these broad universal appeals of dance rhythm and song cadences are indeed, so to speak, the triggers that set off our reactions to music, the actual explosive that is fired in each case is rather the particular fund of associations stored in each listener's mind and heart. The cue is general, but the thought or feeling it suggests is individual. As I have said elsewhere, 'The prophet on fire with righteous indignation and the common scold undergo in anger the same suffusion of blood, the same boiling up of the organs; yet how different in degrees of value are their sentiments! Music, by setting up a certain sympathetic turmoil in the organs, will plunge one man into a selfish opium-dream and will fill another with the rarest, most magnanimous aspirations. . . . No fine sensibility or dignity or profundity of character will be without its quiet, far-reaching effect on the appreciation of music.' "

A man, in short, is known by the music he appreciates. If music does wonders to us, it is only when we are inwardly prepared, by experience, for the wonders.

### *How to Experience Music*

Thus music plays its profound part in the opening-out of life, in the release of what is pent up in ourselves, and in sweeping us into an emotional life which is wider than our immediate experience. "The other night," writes Dr. L. P. Jacks,<sup>1</sup> "I was listening to a very remarkable per-

<sup>1</sup> *Adult Education and the Arts*. Bulletin XXVI, Nov., 1925; World Association for Adult Education.

formance of community singing, and the thought flashed across my mind . . . that somebody without knowing it had discovered a potent means of promoting harmony and good temper and the spirit of friendly coöperation among the masses of mankind."

I remember going to a lecture in one of the adult schools of Sweden. The lecturer entered the room. "Page forty-three," he said, or its equivalent in Swedish. To the surprise of my American mind, trained to the belief that music has no place in the severe discipline of the intellect, the class broke into song. The effect was instant. The forty-odd were no longer so many separate individuals, but a living unity. Even I, the stranger, was swung into that living unity; and though I could not understand much of the lecture that followed, I had the warm sense that I belonged with the group.

Music does that. And because it performs just this integrating function, it is deeply essential that music be made part of the life of every individual. How shall we accomplish this?

Not, surely, as our parents tried to accomplish it in the past. They did about everything possible to make music detestable. They took the small child before he could understand what it was all about; and—because they had the false belief that if one did not start early all was lost—they sat him down before his instrument and forced his immature muscles and his immature emotions to a task far beyond their psychological levels. If he could learn to play "My Country 'Tis of Thee" they exhibited him proudly to the neighbors—which was bad for him and silly of them. Usually, it was not the boy who suffered this but the girl. The boy escaped and was happy; and all through his life



he was proud of the fact that he—thank God—was unmusical. But sister drearily drummed away because it was expected of girls. It helped them in the arduous years when young men called at the house. The girl who could play prettily could induce amorous feelings, could get the young men to hang yearningly over the piano, break into sudden perspiration and propose. So music, detestable as it was in those childhood years, was an asset. Parents implied: "Go through the agony, my dear. It will pay in the end. And you will thank your papa and mama for the music lessons they gave you."

All that is being altered. In the more progressive quarters, music is entering life as play is entering it—naturally, joyously. It is entering it upon the child's psychological level. How? By starting with what is most natural to the child—rhythmic movement. By the singing of simple songs. By letting the children themselves make the melodies that fit their childish moods. Music which is brought into life in this way stays in. It shapes the character. It moulds expansive human beings.

### *Lo, the Poor Adult*

But now the adult. Suppose that he was badly trained or not trained at all. He has no power to make music, that is, to play, to re-interpret the music that others have written. He listens *to* it, sometimes almost resentfully. It does not come out of him—except perhaps when he whistles at his shaving.

The conventional thing to tell an adult is: "My dear sir, what you need is musical education. Go and hear Professor Zymfony lecture on Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Handel, and

the rest." But to hear that Bach was born in 1685, and wrote this, that, and the other, does not put music into him. Even hearing Bach will not inevitably put music into him.

If he has been trained badly or not at all, he must doubtless start as a child starts—with the things he can do. A child can be rhythmic. So can he. If he possesses a Victrola, he can turn on a rhythm and swing his body into the movement. He can change the rhythm and have the fun of changing with it. He can get at a piano and try out the notes that go together and the notes that do not. He can take a poem and make up a melody that expresses what the poem makes him feel. Or he can have the pleasure of picking out with one finger the melodies he likes.

If he goes at it and tries to enjoy music, he will soon find himself in a position where he will be longing to play it effectively. And he will one day discover that naturally, quite unobtrusively, music has become an inseparable part of his life. And then he will probably discover that music, instead of being a kind of polite frill to life, is one of the most powerful means to bring about that fine expansiveness which makes him into a wholesome creature of the group.

We have developed, in this chapter, a theory about music, and have indicated how that theory may be applied in everyday life. Will not the reader put it to a critical test? If he will listen to various types of music, he will be able to decide whether music, for him, expresses emotion in its universality. I have found it an interesting experiment to have music played that was unfamiliar to those of us present and then compare notes as to the emotions aroused. Titles to music are generally a nuisance—at least from the point of view of such an experiment. They prevent one from re-

sponding to music with an unspoiled directness of feeling.

Will the reader, then, test out likewise the second theory advanced, that music arouses in us incipient bodily responses?

Does music ever make one shrink within oneself? If it does, what kind of music is it? Does music, in the main, have an expansive effect?

How would the reader himself introduce music into life so that its full expansive power might be gained?

## CHAPTER XIII

### EYES THAT SEE

#### Neglected Resources in Vision

In the preceding chapter, we saw how music could generate in us a certain expansiveness. Can the art which appeals to the eye do the same thing? I think we are fairly in the dark about this. To be sure, we teach art, and we have art around us in picture galleries and on our walls. But it is doubtful whether many persons could say why we have all this art, and more particularly of what psychological importance art is to us. Most of us take the pictures and the statuary and the ornamented bowls and dishes for granted as having something to do, we know not what, with beauty in life. If we knew just what art actually does to us, might we perhaps more effectively utilize the resources of art for the upbuilding of the kind of personality in which we are here interested?

It might be a helpful preliminary if the reader would look about his room and ask himself what the pictures which hang upon his walls have done to him, or are now doing. I suspect he would dubiously shake his head. "Hadn't noticed them for ages." "Just ornamental." "They take away the bareness." Not a highly complimentary survey.

We have miles and miles of picture galleries. What do they mean to most people save miles and miles of weary

walking, with a few tepid admirations on the way? The houses we live in are not just four walls with holes stuck in to admit light and air; they were designed by artists, made to be looked at with a certain pleasure. What purpose does this quality serve in our lives? Or if we hesitate to give the name of artist to the commercial contractor who put up our jerry-built domicile, what purpose is *not* served by its standardized hideousness? We sit in chairs, at tables. We *see* these. Does it make any difference what kind of chairs or tables we see? Our walls are colored and decorated. Does it make any difference how they are colored or decorated?

Sometimes we stand on a mountain-top and look out over the country below. "Beautiful," we say. Does that seeing of something we call "beautiful" have anything to do with our psychological processes?

What, in short, does this seeing of beauty have to do with ourselves? Here is a whole region that needs careful exploring. We can only make a swift dash through a part of it, with the hope of finding something which will have a bearing upon our problem of building up expansive personalities.

### *Different Kinds of Seeing*

Seeing, in the first place, performs a very practical function. If an automobile is coming my way at a high speed, it is ordinarily necessary that I see it in order to get out of the way. Seeing, of this kind, has *instrumental* value. It is a means to something else. In this case it serves to keep my precious self alive. Or if I pass out a five-dollar bill for a one-dollar purchase, it is essential that I see the bills I receive in change. A cursory glance at each bill, however,

will be enough. I shall wish to see each one only sufficiently to be able to identify it.

Most of our seeing is of this cursorily identifying kind. We are really interested not in the things seen, but in our own affairs. I leap out of the way of the automobile and heartily damn it. I stuff the greenbacks into my wallet. Whether the car is a good-looking one or the greenbacks are peculiarly hideous is immaterial. I am not interested in *them*. I see these things only sufficiently to guard myself or to use them for myself.

The same is true of a good deal of my seeing of people. On the street they are in my way, let us say, and since I am in a hurry I must push my way among them. These people, at present, are nothing to me—save possible hindrances. I identify them only sufficiently to carry on my own concerns.

In this identifying kind of seeing, then, the psychological movement always revolves about myself. It does not go out towards the object, embrace it with interest. It seeks to know it not in all its essentials, but only just enough to make me able to act as the occasion requires.

Thus two qualities are characteristic of what we might call our ordinary seeing. In the first place, such seeing does not really take us outside ourselves. We move, for example, in the midst of a thousandfold world. But that thousandfold world does not lure us to thousandfold exploration. It is around us and about us; but we remain chiefly concerned with our own affairs. Here again is a case of *projection* on our part. Our eyes look out; but what they see is only what our own practical interests bring back. Thus, in this sense, our ordinary seeing is not expansive but, in large measure, contractive.

In the second place, this kind of purely practical seeing

habituates us to partial vision. This is exceedingly important to notice. We see only enough to give us the necessary clues to action. What is that object which is bearing down upon me? Ah yes, a man on horseback. "Man on horseback": that is enough. What kind of a man, whether the kind with whom I should like to be acquainted, whether intelligent, or stupid, or sensual, or autocratic—I pay no attention to all that. He is just "man on horseback," and I let him pass by. Thus, although we see, we grow the habit of really not seeing beyond necessity. So that most of what is about us remains unseen.

I suppose that a majority of the persons we pass in the streets are of this necessity-seeing type. For them, chairs are to be sat on, dishes to carry the food; moths are pests to be killed; lights are to read by, and so on. If we are more intelligent, however, we see in another kind of way—what might be called interest-seeing, or, perhaps, curiosity-seeing. If I am a personnel manager I may regard some of the hundreds of human beings with whom I deal with a far deeper interest than I do the rest. If I am a scientist, I become absorbed in the examination of my special objects of study. Such interest-seeing is quite different in character from the contractive necessity-seeing of which we have spoken. It is essentially expansive in its movement.

### *Pretty Pictures*

Let us pass now to a far different type of seeing. A sturdy citizen stands in the art department of a dry-goods store before the picture of a great mastiff. "Exact to the life!" he cries. And being particularly fond of mastiffs, he takes the specimen home. He there points out to his wife delightedly,

how *natural* the picture is. "I can almost hear that dog bark! And look at those ears. Every wrinkle in them is right." Or here is a young man casting his eyes over magazines on a newstand. He spies a candy-girl picture on the front page of one of the monthlies. "Gee," he says. "That's some girl!" And he carries the magazine home, strips off the cover, and pins his beloved on the wall.

Something significant happened in both these cases. The seeing was not just of the cursory, identifying type. Each enjoyed what he saw. There was therefore a movement out from the beholder to the object beheld.

Here, then, is the beginning of another kind of seeing. But in neither of these cases did the beholder move very far. The sturdy citizen was taken with a particular dog; he wanted that dog. The young man fell in love with a particular lady; he wanted that lady. So each carried away his particular possession, as he might have carried away a dog in the flesh or a lady in the flesh. The picture, in each case, was a particular substitute for a particular thing.

No doubt the young man, finding that he has a silent and unresponsive lady-love, will soon cease to look upon her. He will purchase other lady-loves. And the owner of the mastiff will, after awhile, pass by his loyal canine and fail to look for an answering wag of the pictured tail. These "works of art," in other words, for a reason which I think we shall be able to discover, soon cease to *do* anything to the beholders.

### *Story Pictures*

Let me take another instance. A stout, sentimental lady sees a color print of a handsome young huntsman facing



a furious boar at bay. There is danger; but the handsome young huntsman is obviously unafraid. With the courage of one born to high adventure, he holds his spear ready for the throw. The lady knows that he will throw it; knows, too, that it will reach the heart of the threatening boar. She loves her daring huntsman. So she buys the picture and carries it home for the dining-room—just above the buffet. But after a number of weeks, the sentimental lady withdraws her gaze from her huntsman, ceases to hang on the fatal plunge of the ever-ready spear. The picture continues to grace the dining-room—for the frame cost more than the print; but something has gone out of it. Why is this?

### *Towards the Clue*

The secret, one suspects, lies in the fact that these pictures are merely representations of particular things or persons or events—a dog, a girl's face, a story. Now particular things or persons, in the life, may indeed draw us forth to endless communion, as when we marry a particular wife or gain a particular friend, each of whom, being alive, can reveal new facets. But pictures that simply copy particular things or events seem to have a swift way of growing stale. They have no new facets to reveal.

That, I think, is why there is a weariness about so much that is in the galleries. Those reclining women, those postured, opulent old men, those snorting horses, those ships with bellying sails—interesting? Yes, for a cursory moment. But they are just individual reclining women, and posturing old men, and snorting horses, and bellying sails. Far better to go out and meet these things in the life. Why hang these dead representations on dead walls?

In our discussion of music, we found that if we wanted exact picturing, we could have steam whistles, the clatter of hoofs, the songs of nightingales, or the telling of a story. But that, we discovered, was not music—at least not great music. The greatness of music lay in its power to liberate us, to sweep us free from the specific, the concrete, and attune us to a kind of universality. The same is true of the pictures that stay by us, those to which we return, those that set something going and keep something going in us. How do they do it? If the reader has not yet already found an answer to this question in his own art experience, will he try the following experiment? Let him gather together a score or more of pictures and place them in two piles. In one pile let him place all those pictures which are exact copies or attempts at exact copies—of persons, or trees, or flowers, or events, or what not; in the other pile, all those which are obviously not attempts at exact copies. The figure in this picture, let us say, is that of a dog. But it is no individual dog. It is something more. We shall grant that the artist might have drawn that dog to the life, with every hair in place. Why did he deliberately set about to draw that creature differently? But study the picture. Is there something in it that intrigues? Something that gives the strong feeling of reality? Speed? Alertness? Iron muscles? *Dog*. Is it not that which the picture tells—not this particular dog or that, but the essence, the one pervading characteristic which is this multitudinous, lovable, half-wild, half-human creature that runs about our streets, follows at our heels, that is swift after quarry? The artist caught one essence. He might, of course, have caught others. For every creature or thing is the integration of many essential traits.

Or here is a picture of a woman. No man ever wooed that

woman, or could woo her; for she never existed, could never exist. And yet, we cannot help looking at her, thinking about her, coming back to her. There is more there than we ever saw in any individual woman. We might grow tired of an individual woman hanging on our wall. But this woman? This is not *a* woman. This is *woman*.

How does the artist do it? Obviously—if the reader will look over his second pile—by abstracting from the particular details, by accentuating certain features, by selecting some and rejecting others. The artist, in short, is trying to get to the “felt nature” of the thing or person, to the very essence of it.

#### *Away from the Particular*

And now we come to a most significant discovery. Is not what the artist does, precisely what all intelligence does? Any ordinary mind, for example, can behold this, that, or the other particular thing. But, as we said before, it takes the mind of a Newton to get hold of the deeply essential something which runs all through the multitudinous things. Science is the process of getting hold of these profound essentials. We call them the “laws of nature.” Again, an ordinary mind can have an emotion—at this disaster or at that particular good fortune. But it takes a Beethoven or a Brahms to express the very essence of sadness or of joy—the sadness and the joy that belong universally, that lie deep in the life of all of us.

And so, likewise, it takes an artist to make us see not the bewildering details of the world around us, but the essences, the great underlying universals that give significance to our human experience. The artist sees the daring in that face,

the gaiety in that figure, the grief in that old woman, the unbending, wind-swept ruggedness of that tree, the upward reach of that cathedral spire, sees the brooding warmth of sunlight, the sombreness of shadow, the ecstasy of dancing starlight.

If the reader has not yet actually experienced this about pictures, and will contrive to live with that second pile of his, I think he will find this to be true. If he will carry the experiment further, taking down from his walls every picture which photographically copies an individual thing or person or story, and—one at a time and only for a time—will place on his walls the pictures that are obviously not photographic copies, many of which his friends will call “unnatural” “out of drawing,” “crazy,” “meaningless,” I think he will find something very striking beginning to happen in him. He will look at his lone picture, will wonder about it; he will go away from it and again come back to it. He will find himself thinking in all kinds of new ways, feeling much as he feels when he listens to the surge of great music.

Thus, emerging from the thralldom of “pretty” pictures, of romantic story-telling pictures, one may become an *essentialist* in art. One may bring into the world of one’s seeing, that universality which the scientist and the philosopher bring into the world of our thinking and the creative musician into the world of our hearing. One may, in short, take oneself out of the world of insignificant, into the world of significant form.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This kind of art which refuses to copy detail and seeks only the significant form or the “felt nature of the thing,” is called *classic art*. Consult an illuminating account in Ralph M. Pearson’s *How to See Modern Pictures* (The Dial Press, New York). It seems to me that the word “classic” is unfortunate; for at once one thinks of the days of Greece, and sets this art down as simply a return to the past. I feel that a word is

*And So with the Rest*

We have talked of pictures. The same ideas, I think, hold with regard to sculpture, design, architecture, furniture, and our views from mountain-tops—to what, in short, we call “beauty” in any of its forms.

Suppose I stand before some building that I like. What do I *feel* about it? What does the building *do* to me? If it is a dwelling-place, does it give me a sense of coziness, of warmth, of intimate comfort? I have, then, caught its essence. If it is an office-building, does it give me a sense of daring, of something that soars, that will not be stopped? Then, again, I have caught its essence. Of some buildings I can grasp no essence. They are fussy, elaborate, meaningless. They say nothing. Or they try to say something and mix their speech, as when they stand frilled out with Corinthian columns in front of the straight, business-like structures of bank-buildings.

Architecture is art when it expresses essences, when the “form follows function.” When it expresses nothing at all, it is not art but utilitarian make-shift.

The same is true of sculpture, design, and the rest. The reader can carry on the story. He can recall the pottery chickens and the marble ladies, the porcelain flowers and the bronze busts, fussy, detailed copies of somebody or something. And he can recall the designs—on the calicoes or tapestries or tea-cups or the printed page—that are exact copies of roses, or geraniums, or what not. Then let him hunt for the sculpture and the design that get beneath the

needed which describes, instantly and unambiguously, what this non-representative, non-story-telling art does. That word, I suggest, should be *essentialistic* rather than *classic*. When we speak of essentialistic art, the term points exactly to what we mean.

surfaces; that depict in stone or bronze or pottery, or in line and color, what eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but what we have *felt* about things.

A study of design is particularly rewarding. Design is built up out of certain fundamentals in the life-process—balance, opposition, transition, repetitive rhythm, unity, dominance, and the rest. It is for that reason that design does not grow stale. It is not a copy of this or that. A copy would focus our minds upon a particular thing, and we should grow tired of the particular thing. Rather, it is life in its broad, essential movements. Thus design, like the pictures we have already described, swings us out of particularity into essences, makes us one with the wider and the deeper movements of life.

In fact, the artist is often so impressed with the basic character of design or arrangement that he ceases to be interested in subject altogether. He will take any subject whatever, sometimes one which the uninitiated would call positively ugly, and treat it wholly as a study in design or arrangement. What the artist sees, in other words, is not what the ordinary person sees. In fact, this type of artist rather scorns what the ordinary person sees. It is for that reason, no doubt, that his work is almost always misunderstood.

### *Insisting upon the Details*

And now, finally, for the view from the mountain-top. We have climbed up to the very topmost peak. The world is beneath us. We feel the limitless sweep of it, the shimmer of its far-away surfaces, the amazing distance of it, the stillness.

And then our companion hauls out his field-glasses! He refuses to be liberated. He wants to pick up again what the mountain-top has taken from him—all the trivial detail of the lowlands. He searches with his glasses. "I can see," he cries delightedly, "I can see three pigs down there in that pig-pen!"

### *Conclusion*

We are interested here in the building up of what we have called the expansive qualities in the individual. We asked the question: Can we *see* expansively, as we can hear and think expansively? If we can, there should be much of the kind of seeing we have been describing in the fundamental training of all of us. Yet most persons probably do not know that this kind of seeing is possible, or, if possible, that it has an effect profoundly worthwhile. Art, even of the pretty-picture and story-telling sort, is only a kind of incidental side-issue in the home, school, and community. Art of this more essential kind is even less known.

I do not mean to say that there must be no more pictures that try to hold themselves with some fidelity to the life. I have in mind a portrait of a boy which I saw recently.<sup>1</sup> The boy had died, and the portrait had been painted from photographs. The artist said to me: "I studied scores of photographs of the lad, from his infant days to the time of his death. I tried to think myself *into* the boy, to *feel* his boy-nature." And she had succeeded. She had caught the essential boy—the glowing, frank, animal-loving lad, with his puppies in his arms and the anxious old mother-dog by his

<sup>1</sup> By Mary Curtis Richardson, of San Francisco.

side. The artist had penetrated to the essence. The picture was more than a good portrait.

Although one must talk with hesitancy of matters in a field as psychologically unexplored as the one we have been considering, I think we are justified in believing that the constant seeing of things *in their essence* must inevitably have a very real influence in broadening and deepening our psychological responses. The "man that hath no music in his soul" is now sufficiently deplored. Perhaps we shall soon begin to deplore a little more anxiously, and make effort to re-train, the man that hath eyes to see and seeth not.

Will this theory about essentialism in art hold? Does the reader find the essentialistic quality in the pictures he likes? If not, what is the quality in them that makes him like them? Do these pictures seem to have any noticeable effect upon him? Or if he is indifferent to pictures, why is this so?

Before the reader decides about the theory, will he try this—look for essences, in people, trees, animals, houses? Here is a fat, pudgy house; there a tall, thin, austere one; here is one that smiles invitingly; there another that glowers and repels. Or here is a tree that, battered and worn, still stands, sturdily holding its own; here is a tree that droops gracefully as if inviting to its shade; here is a tree that thrusts out its arms straight and firm; here is one that curls and entwines. Can he express these essences by a few lines, aiming not to copy the particular object, but to capture and express the feeling it gives him?

Design is a particularly interesting field for investigation. Why are certain designs pleasing? Why are others inadequate or distressing? Can he find in the design which is



powerful the expression of fundamental life-qualities, like balance, continuity, etc.?

Will the reader put his environment to the test? How much of beauty is there in it which draws him out, holds his interest? How much of ugliness which distresses him, casts him back upon himself? What, precisely, is beauty and what does it do to one? What is ugliness?

## CHAPTER XIV

### WHY POETRY?

#### A Psychological Approach to Poetic Values

What now of poetry? Does the reader groan? Poetry! Ah, yes, he studied poetry—in school. I suppose teachers, with the best intentions in the world, have done more to dull the edge of poetry than all the philistines in the world. It is their very pedagogical solicitude which has done it. Children, they have solemnly said, must know poetry; it is essential to their culture. So they have assigned “lessons” in poetry. “Describe the metric construction of the Vision of Sir Launfal.” “Analyze Wordsworth’s ‘The World is Too Much with Us’ and describe its sonnet form.” “What does Shelley mean by saying of the Skylark: ‘Bird thou never wert’?” And so on with the scholastic dry-rot of a false and unimaginative literary science, until poetry has become associated not with freedom and song and exhilarating adventure, but with the dreariness of home-work and the fear of flunks.

#### *Trying Out Poetry*

Can poetry do anything to us, as music does, and great plastic art? In order to answer these questions, will the reader be good enough to submit himself to poetry for a page or so? We are seeking to discover what it is that

poetry does to us, and whether this has any bearing upon the issues we are discussing.

Will he say the following lines (of Miss Millay) aloud—slowly enough to get something of the feel of them?

“Death devours all lovely things;  
 Lesbia with her sparrow  
 Shares the darkness,—presently  
 Every bed is narrow.”

I do not know whether the reader will agree that there is a sheer loveliness about these lines. They speak of the saddest thing we know—a thing universal, inexorable—the passing away of beauty in death. And yet, is the sadness wholly sad? Does it have the contractive, shrinking effect of a particular grief? Or is it a sadness that has been transmuted into something that is beautiful and therefore a joy? What has done this—if, in fact, it has been done?

Let the reader again say aloud these lines of Edwin Arlington Robinson:

“Like a wild wine her love  
 Went singing through him and all over him;  
 And like a warming her warm loveliness  
 Told him how far away it would all be  
 When it was warm no longer.”

Is there not something here of an ecstasy we all have felt—or wished that we might have felt—an ecstasy mingled with the poignant boding of loss, and so all the more precious for its transience? “Like a wild wine” . . . “went singing through him and all over him.” These are not mere words. They are something more. What are they?

Now let the reader try—again aloud—the following lines of Aline Kilmer, spoken by a father about his son: <sup>1</sup>

“If I live till my fighting days are done  
I must fasten my armour on my eldest son.

“I would give him better, but this is my best.  
*I* can get along without it—I’ll be glad to have a rest.

“And I’ll sit mending armour with my back against the wall,  
Because I have a second son, if this one should fall.

“So I’ll make it very shiny and I’ll whistle very loud,  
And I’ll clap him on the shoulder and I’ll say, very proud:

“This is the lance *I* used to bear!  
But I mustn’t tell what happened when I bore it.

“This is the helmet *I* used to wear!  
But I won’t say what befell me when I wore it.

“For you couldn’t tell a youngster, it wouldn’t be right,  
That you wished you had died in your very first fight.

“And I mustn’t say that victory is never worth the cost,  
That defeat may be bitter, but it’s better to have lost.

“And I mustn’t say that glory is as barren as a stone.  
I’d better not say anything, but leave the lad alone.

“So he’ll fight very bravely and probably he’ll fall:  
And I’ll sit mending armour with my back against the wall.”

What do those lines do? Particularly if the reader is a father of sons?

And now Arthur Ficke’s lines:

<sup>1</sup> In “*The Poor King’s Daughter*.”

"I will return  
 To my calm lamplight; and as years ago  
 Take down the sacred volumes—slowly turn  
 The nobly singing pages that I know:—  
 Listen again to the young Shelley's voice  
 Speak beautiful madness, better than our truth.

. . . . .  
 Or I will watch the ghost of Goethe move  
 Through its vast dream-world, where is still a place  
 For liberal human hope, and generous love,  
 And the slow gathering wisdoms of the race—  
 And live his golden days, and feel his trust  
 That life is more than wind whirling the dust."

As the last tone of an organ lingers does not that last line linger? . . .

And then these whimsical lines of Elizabeth Coatsworth:

"To think I once saw grocery shops  
 With but a casual eye,  
 And fingered figs and apricots  
 As one who came to buy.

"To think I never dreamed of how  
 Bananas sway in rain,  
 And often looked at oranges  
 But never thought of Spain.

"And in those wasted days I saw  
 No sails above the tea,  
 For grocery shops were grocery shops—  
 Not hemispheres to me."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This poem is to be found in Henry Neumann's "Drums of Morning," a small collection of finely chosen bits of poetry.

*Liberation*

Have we not here something of the same thing that music does? Not quite, to be sure, for music, as we have seen, functions without verbal concepts. In poetry there are always verbal concepts. But are not the concepts so chosen that we are again swept out of our centrality, away from the contractiveness of the urgent immediate?

The commonplace mind is commonplace because it experiences only sharply particularized things and events. It wraps up this bundle, despatches this letter, pays this bill, knits this particular doily, gossips about this neighbor, hates this individual, and finally, makes provision for its own particular and very special immortal soul. It cannot live in wider circles of experience, actual or imaginary. To use Agnes Lee's vivid phrase, it is "bark bound." Although the following poem apparently has a more special application than that which we make of it here, it will serve to express the type of mind which is bound by particular, immediate things.

"In her home a woman I know  
Is a bark-bound tree,  
The flowers bloom at her feet,  
But she does not see.

"The knife has glittered by  
To the forest to prune,  
And left her deaf to the wind  
And blind to the moon.

"She must live on her sap,  
In her ease and dark,

Until she shrivels and dies  
In her walls of bark.

“Unless the glittering knife  
Should return her way,  
And set its steel to the bark  
And let in day.”

Is poetry, perhaps, a kind of glittering knife that sets its steel to the thick rind of our commonplace and lets in day?

*How Shall We Bring in Poetry?*

How can one acquire the liberating effect of poetry? We face the same problem that we faced in music. Poetry must be an experience we love to have. Never in the whole range of education—particularly at the beginning—must it be made into a grievous task. If we desire discipline, far better to get it through plotting rhomboids or finding cubic contents or learning the capitals of states. We can hurt the child's love of arithmetic and geography, and no great damage will be done; they are tough and will survive. But if we hurt his love of poetry, we do something to the later life of the individual that is in large measure irretrievable.

So, at least, many teachers are now beginning to believe. Therefore they are starting out with poetry, not as something to study, but as something joyously to experience and create.

First of all, poetry has a *lilt* which the child loves.

“The north wind doth blow  
And we shall have snow  
And what will poor Robin do then,  
Poor thing?”

This is as natural and lovely to a child as skipping. It dances, sings. It has a curious magic of rhythms and rhymes. The child will say it over and over again for its fascinating lilting quality.

What does this lilting quality do to us? To express it in plain prose, it builds up expectancies. Let the reader say over again the simple nursery rhyme given above. To make the experiment more convincing, let him beat time or sway with his body as he repeats the first two lines. As he comes to the third line, what happens? Does his hand wait to find out what it must do? No, it actually swings into the expected rhythm. The secret of the psychological effect of rhythm lies precisely in this, that the sequent movements are already expected. The mind carries on, moves ahead.

Psychologically—and therapeutically—this is of far profounder significance than is ordinarily realized. To move ahead, to keep swinging along, what is that but the very opposite of the contractiveness, the seclusiveness, the locked-up-tightness we have found to be so generally symptomatic of psychological ill-health?

If we give the child half a chance, he will pursue the magic of these rhythms. He will make them up himself.

“It’s lots of fun  
To skip and run.”

But here is the curious thing. When he achieves that rhythm, he finds it is even more fun to *say* that it’s fun to skip and run than to do the actual skipping and running. These are commonplace, everyday things which anybody can do. But those two lines, with the miraculous, rhyming words! They



are something which add a touch of glory to the young creator's day.

Teachers are beginning to realize this. Making rhythms and rhymes can be as natural and joyous an experience in the child's life as jumping rope or playing tag. And if grown-ups were not so tied into hard knots by their solemn inhibitions, they, too, would make rhythms and rhymes for the fun of it.

### *Makers of Dreams*

But poetry is something more than lilting rhyme or rhythm. I hate to use a word that my scientific friends will darkly frown upon. But I must, for I know no other word that tells the story so well. Poetry is also dream. Even in the simple

"It's lots of fun  
To skip and run"

there is dream. No great dream, but a sense of something wanted, something fine, something that puts glamour into the commonplace. What are all dreams but just that? Later—if they are not ruthlessly crushed—they may grow wider in their sweep. They may touch deeper things. They may swing to the stars. Boys and girls can dream such dreams.

Let me quote a few out of many that came to expression because a great teacher believed that poetry should be joy and that it could be created by children.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mearns, Hughes. *Creative Youth*. The poems in the order given are by Stephen Duggan, James Flexner, Tom Prideaux, Emma Rounds, all students of the Lincoln School, New York City. There are other notable volumes of poetry written by children. I quote the following poems only as samples of what young people can do.

## ABOUT OURSELVES

*Out There*

The other night a fellow left, and  
 He was a real friend of mine.  
 And sometimes at night, when  
 I'm thinking about things,  
 I wonder where he's gone,  
 And if he's coming back,  
 And what it's like out there.

There is nothing in those lines of the "style of yesterday," no "beauteous evening," no "solemn shades of night," no "vague unrest"—all artificial for the child; but a boy's straightforward longing thoughts about his friend and about the world "out there."

Or this that shows the maturing lad:

*So Long*

I am alien to all that you call yours, my friend,  
 So I must leave.  
 Close the door gently behind my back,  
 And return to your desk;  
 Work on with wrinkled eyebrows . . .  
 I will go out by paths I do not know  
 Away from you;  
 And I will not look back,  
 For I shall be afraid.  
 They are too sure, those gods of yours . . .  
 I, who am a weather vane,  
 Must leave your windless room.  
 Close the door gently behind my back  
 And resume your thoughts;  
 But first, turn the key—  
 For I shall be afraid.

Or this quizzical, taunting thing:

With half a laugh of hearty zest  
I strip me off my coat and vest.

Then heeding not the frigid air,  
I fling away my underwear;

So, having nothing else to doff,  
I rip my epidermis off.

More secrets to acquaint you with,  
I pare my bones to strips of pith.

And when the exposé is done  
I hang, a cobweb skeleton . . .

While there you sit, aloof, remote,  
And will not shed your overcoat.

Could there be a more zestful, laughing, invitation to let go, to come across, to get out of one's seclusive grumps?

Finally, I cannot forbear quoting this merry rhyme of transportation:

*The Subway*

Children, see this pretty thing,  
Every morning it will bring  
Loads of people to the city.  
Isn't it an awful pity  
That they have to stand and swing  
By a silly little string  
Precariously balancing?

If mayhap they get a seat,  
Someone stands upon their feet;  
If they keep their elevation  
By employing concentration,  
In their fervid exaltation  
They are sure to pass their station!

Boys and girls wrote these. Did they have a good time? I think we may safely assume that for them poetry was no hated thing, nor will ever be. Poetry, for them, was a way of life, a way of escaping from the commonplace to something exquisite, far-flung and free.

### *Bringing It Back*

Poetry has unfortunately been made into a thing to be studied pedantically. Some day the philologists and the grammarians will be bowed away into their proper scholastic quarters and poetry will again, as it was in the ancient days, be a thing of sheer joy.

There is another great teacher, Dr. Frederick Koch, of the University of North Carolina, who believes in the dreams that lie hidden beneath the rind of the commonplace in his students. He was reading the other night a play written by two of his students ("Fixins," by Erma and Paul Green), which shows in simple prose drama—so simple in vocabulary as to put a college man to shame—a poet's insight into the things that kill life and the things that make life glorious. When we hear the term "college students" now-a-days we associate it, a little wearily and disgustedly, with jazzing around, hip pockets, "necking" parties and an amused toleration of the life intellectual. Most of us do

not expect the finer thing; and that, perhaps, is why we fail to get it.

But hopeful things are happening. The dark age of poetry among us is almost over. A little time and the pedants will be routed; and poetry will be brought back where it belongs—to be everywhere the builder of dreams.

Unfortunately the psychiatrist does not seem to say much about poetry. But he talks about “re-educating” his psycho-neurotic patient. It should not be difficult to see that if a life is to build up firm resistances to glooms and despairs; if it is to emerge from a sickly seclusiveness, or from an arrogance of egotism, it can be helped in the task by the lilt and dream of poetry. Provided, of course, that the poetry—whether read or created—is an inner, joyous experience and not simply something which the patient is assigned to read.

In our sanitariums a mental patient is often given hand-work to do—weaving baskets, making furniture, etc.—on the ground that he must actively do something in which he takes a personal and absorbing interest. For the rest of us, who are not in sanitariums, but whose mental and emotional vibrancy is not always everything to boast of, there are, I think, few occupations more absorbing than the creating of poetry and drama.

Of course, we are all shy. We have had it so drummed into us that poetry and drama should be produced by the poets or the dramatists that we never dream that we, too, can turn the trick. We may not, indeed, become poets or playwrights; but we shall move into wider areas, breathe a keener air.

## CHAPTER XV

### TONGUES THAT TALK

#### A Brief Excursion into Conversation

And now for a really crucial test for individuals. Let us listen to conversations. We may learn a great deal from them. Not about what is talked of, which is often quite unimportant, but about the persons who do the talking. For, after all, as a man speaketh with his tongue, so is he.

There is a general belief that the tongue is so wily an instrument that it can easily be used to deceive. But not altogether. There are some things which the tongue, once it starts going, cannot hide—things sometimes, that are revealing.

The reader will remember that music is a liberation from the specific; that great art does not copy the innumerable details but depicts the essences; that great thinking—as we find it in the scientist or philosopher—does not string things along, one after another, or lose itself in the mere multitudinousness of them, but goes unerringly to the one in all the bewildering many.

And now let us listen to conversations. How much of the above qualities do we find? Or do we find talk of this and that—the weather, to begin with; how charming the curtains are; did you know that the Chumleys have just returned from Europe; and weren't you *horrified* at the Smiths seeking a divorce; and, oh yes, Charles *did* say that he liked

the sage-green dress immensely. . . . Conversations that rattle; that leap irrelevantly from one trifling matter to another; gossiping conversations; conversations that simply keep going because the going is required; that start nowhere and get nowhere.

There is a certain typical garrulousness, in short, a kind of endless talk of this, that, and the other thing. It does not make much difference what the particular thing is that is talked about, as long as the particular thing is there to fill up the silent spaces.

I wonder whether this is not one of the most prevalent of vices—the particularistic, small, specific as opposed to the large, outreaching, universality-type of talk. We might call such talk *particularistic garrulity*. The name seems, indeed, a heavy one to bear; but it may mark out this species of talk sufficiently to enable us to classify it when we hear it.

What, after all, does particularistic garrulity indicate but an inability to get to the deeper, more essential and wide-reaching qualities in life, an inability which marks the mind not yet grown to maturity?

Contrast, now, this other type. There are a half-dozen persons sitting around together. There is laughter at times; a good deal of quiet smiling. But also a kind of brooding in the faces. "No," says one of them, "the thing goes farther down than that. People don't lie because they are 'bad' or steal because they are 'vicious.' Some day our system of punishment will first enquire about the early training and environment of the people it punishes."

We feel the difference, instantly. Here is a digging down to essentials. Here is *thought*. And for that reason, here, where two or three are gathered together, there is a something more than chatter in their midst.

Not all talk, to be sure, must be deeply philosophical, serious. Laughter is by no means a foe of reason. Talk can be gay with humor. The flash of wit may add both brilliance and penetration. But whatever talk is, if it is to be worth the talking, it must *go somewhere*, and it must go in a direction that is worth taking.

And now, I think, a rare holiday awaits the reader. He may never have carried on systematic observations in this field. He will however find such investigations a source of keen psychological interest. He will discover all sorts of conversational types. Every conversation will be a kind of psychological laboratory, in which he will find minds exposing themselves in ways that reveal their essential quality.

Talk, in other words, is not accidental, any more than one's handshake is accidental. It shows up what people are. If they have a way of chattering particularistically, something is obviously wrong with them. How can the defect be corrected?



## CHAPTER XVI

### OUTPUT FOR INTAKE

#### Inducing Mental Transformation

An individual, then, may starve in many ways. He may starve for that which builds up the mental and emotional life, starve for affection, so that he becomes shrunk within his own bitterness or gloom or cynicism, starve for knowledge, so that he becomes provincial, narrow with prejudices, sharp with ignorant contentions, starve for great companionships, so that his interests and ideals shrink to the pinpoints of the commonplace. He may starve for that wonder of sound which releases us from the near-to and immediate and sweeps us into the infinities, starve for that magic of color, line and mass which opens us to things we have not seen, starve for the rhythm and the dream of great poetry. And so, psychologically emaciated, meagre-souled, with thin emotions and under-nourished mentality, he may be our well-groomed, well-fleshed, garrulous talker, talking everlastingly about a multitude of nothings, and believing that all the nothings mount up in a lifetime to something prodigiously worth while.

Life-sustaining materials, as we have seen, are the first essential for the growing personality. But there is another need of our organic make-up besides that of proper intake. It is the need for transformation. The food taken in must

undergo a change so that it becomes vigorous, living tissue. If it does nothing, it rots, turns into poison.

William James tells the story of a Russian lady who sat weeping at the tragic fate of the hero in the opera while her coachman was freezing outside. One would have called her a lady of refined sensibilities; and had she lived long enough to lose her lands and be shouldered out by the revolution into a heartless world, one would have been angered by the injustice done to a sensitive soul. But William James knew better. Her sensitiveness was theatrical. It was a delight in feeling her own fictional sorrows. In short, she had ingrowing emotions. And so, with his robust humor, and with his eyes on this kind of emotional theatricality, James laid down the rule: When, through art, or music, or poetry, or drama, you are roused in your feelings, *do* something. Say a decent word to your mother-in-law; give an extra nickel to the waiter; buy your wife that long-needed bonnet. Otherwise the emotions, feeding only on themselves, turn into toxins. Sentimentalism is one of these toxins.

Besides ingrowing emotions, we find also what we may call ingrowing mentality. The schools, in the main, have been the forcing-plants for this kind of mentality, in which there is the learning of things without the transformation of the learning into action. It is only recently that a new idea has begun to find its way widely into education. It is the idea of putting knowledge immediately and effectively to use. John Dewey has expressed this as "learning by doing." Decroly, in Brussels, has expressed it by the phrase which describe his school: *l'École pour la vie par la vie*—a school in which there is not a living away from life, a solving of abstract problems that have no vital reality in the child's experience, a learning of rigmaroles that will inevitably be

forgotten—but a school in which, in every exercise, there is the *living of life*. Ferrière, in Geneva, has expressed it by the title of his book *L'École Active*, a school where the students do not sit passively, like little bottles taking in poured-out information, but where they actively generate knowledge in themselves through the process of doing things. Kilpatrick has expressed it in his term "project method." A project is something to do, something to plan, something to gather materials for, to organize and carry through.

Knowledge, in short, in order to be wholesome, must, in some way, be acted out. There is a profound challenge in this new idea, for it applies to the acquisition of knowledge not only in childhood, but at all times. There is a type of adult person whom some of us, a little maliciously perhaps, like to call "lecture hounds." They "take" everything, from medieval art to the movements of glacial masses. One sees them month after month, and year after year, always with the same trustful, vague faces, always with pieces of paper and pencils, and always with a pathetic alertness for the lecturer's: "Now there are three points which I wish to make." Mr. Norman Walker once said at a Tutor's Conference in England that it was impossible for him to witness a lecture without thinking of parasitic worms feeding upon their host! <sup>1</sup>

The new ideas challenge this kind of "learning," and the newer movements in adult education are beginning to take the challenge seriously. Is that sort of thing really education? The answer is in the negative; and as it grows in volume and strength, the passively-heard lecture loses ground as a method of adult education—or of any education. Those

<sup>1</sup> Heath, A. E., *A Philosophy of Adult Education*; Bulletin XXVIII, *World Association for Adult Education*, 16, Russell Square, London.

people out there in the seats must do more than feed upon their host; they themselves must generate something. There is a growing movement to supplement the lecture with vigorous discussion, in some cases even to get rid of lecturing altogether and substitute a process of group inquiry and group solution.

Or if lectures must be heard, this Jamesian plan might be tried: if a person gets an idea from a lecture, *he should not go to another lecture until he has done something with that idea*. He can do anything—the merest trifle. If it is a lecture on international relations, he can tell the car conductor one good thing about the Mexicans. If it is a lecture on psychology, he can buy a new book for his youngster. If it is a lecture on the drama, he can take his grandmother to the theatre.

This will sound trivial. But an alert person who once catches the idea, will carry it out in ways far more serious. If he takes the course in psychology, he may start to reconstruct the personnel relations in his factory; or if he takes the international course, he may put time and effort into far-reaching movements. He will realize that learning is not really educative until it gets profoundly into his behavior-system, until it makes him do important things differently. And yet even to do the very trifling thing will be of signal value, provided he catches hold of the underlying idea, namely, that anything taken in must in some measure be transformed *into something*.

### *From Subject to Situation*

All this may sound somewhat unfamiliar because the schools have habituated us to a different conception of learn-

ing. One studied a "subject"—arithmetic, geography, economics, philosophy. One traversed the subject. It was something "out there"—in a book. One opened the book, read, noted it all down in one's memory. One thanked the textbook author or damned him, as the mood and the paragraph structure impelled. And then, with "something accomplished, something done," one earned one's night's repose. For on the next day, all that had been "learned" could be repeated to the teacher, who would beam or frown in proportion as the memory held or failed.

To be sure, one *seemed*, in this kind of learning, always to be doing something. There was much fussing about with pages, much prowling around libraries. But when one tried to discover what it all amounted to . . . ! I once asked a student in philosophy who had been studying Spinoza, to go to Coney Island and see what philosophy he could find there. He stared in astonishment. Respectable young philosophers—particularly candidates for P.H.D.—did not do that kind of thing. It was not scholarly. He had been accustomed to "getting" his philosophy out of a book. It had never occurred to him that philosophy might be found in human situations. And so, when he was asked to explore the actual situations, he could not easily make the transfer from book to life.

Here, again, is a student, for example, who has learned out of his book in philosophy to conclude that the world is one, not many. That seems an eye-opening thing to have learned. But what of it? Of what actual significance is that truth, if truth it be? As a matter of fact, to discover and to bring into effectiveness, the underlying oneness in the various conflicting diversities among us is perhaps the most real enterprise in life. The world *is* one; only most of us with

our fightings and back-bitings are too stupid or stubborn to know it. But the student only recites. "Yes," he says, "for this reason and that, as *per* the text-book, one must conclude that the world is one." And then a few years later, when he has joined his local lodge, and still fondly remembers the "A" which he received in that course in philosophy, he "whoops it up" for a Bigger and Better Navy!

The weakness of the traditional education has lain, I think, in the fact that there has been scarcely any transfer from book to life. The newer education, on the other hand, starts with life—with concrete situations—"projects," if we wish to call them such, or problems, or what not—and tries to operate with knowledge at work.

Let us examine this contrasted process in an adult class. The case is presented by a class-member of a woman who has lost her husband. She has a boy of eight. She knows that a boy must somehow be given the masculine point of view which a father's presence brings. For various reasons, she is not likely to remarry. What is she to do about it?

I have seen three things happen when this problem came up. First, the group became suddenly galvanized into life. There was no longer a passive sitting back to hear what the lecturer had to say. Everyone was alert, on his seat's edge, to break in and offer suggestions.

Another thing happened. When a group of people sit listening to a lecture, each one individually absorbs. Each has paid his money, each takes, and each carries away for himself. No one does anything for or to anyone else. But now, suddenly, the whole group was alert to help. "What is a masculine point of view?" "Can the mother not herself supply it if she is sufficiently wise?" "Can the boy's scout leader provide it?" One member offered to find an uncle

for the boy. In short, every individual in the group ceased to be simply an isolated, in-taking ego and became a member of the group—an interested out-giving, fellow-creature.

And a third thing happened. In the course of the discussion which followed, psychology, sociology, and economics were hunted into their corners for what they could offer in the way of help. These sciences were no longer abstract "subjects" to be learned. They were tools to be *used*.

In the example just cited, the reader will note that the mental process was set going by the presentation of a *situation*. To work out from specific situations is perhaps the surest way to guard against the subtle disease of in-growing mentality. In studying race relations it is customary to go through all the books on the subject and find out what they say. One may, after awhile, be learned, but probably quite useless. The less obvious thing to do is to go out and meet a race situation in life. Here, for example, is the manager of a business. He has advertised for help. A young man by the name of Lomas is sent into the office. The manager talks with him a moment, then with a hard glint in his eye, he asks: "Lomas, why didn't you tell them out there that your name wasn't Lomas?" Lomas admits that he is Lomashefsky; but he protests, can "Lomashefsky" get him anywhere in America? The manager dismisses him with a wave of the hand. He wants honest men.

What about this case? Did Lomashefsky have the right to hide his identity? Did not the manager have the moral right to keep a deceiving foreigner out of his business? But was the manager really thinking in terms of morality or in terms of race prejudice? Would he have cared if Smith, the Nordic, had changed his name to Rutherford? How

much of this sort of thing goes on? What can be done about it?

The case of Lomashefsky and the manager is only a particular one; but it involves attitudes and principles which will be found to run through thousands of life situations. A real tackling of their case, then, will disclose the significant universals that lie hidden in the particular situation. To be able to see that particular situations are not just isolated, momentary happenings, but are related to attitudes and principles as wide as life itself is, no doubt, to achieve that deeper comprehension which is the beginning of wisdom.

### *Building Intelligence*

The ingrowing mentality which feeds on "subjects" is, with a certain euphemistic self-congratulation, called knowledge. A great deal of it can be achieved in the eight or ten years of school life and the four years of college, and it can give one an imposing air of having been educated. Expansive mentality, on the other hand, of the kind here described, which can actually tackle situations and solve them, has another name. It is called intelligence. Intelligence cannot get along without knowledge; but knowledge can get along quite handily with only a bare minimum of intelligence. We have but to live for a space with many of our impractically and narrowly fixated "learned" people to find that out.

Intelligence, fundamentally, is the power *to meet new situations*. The emphasis is on the "new." "Animal training,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Everett Dean Martin's penetrating chapter in his *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*.



of course, can give one the power to meet situations which are indefinitely repeated—to wrap up packages, for example, or bake biscuits, or translate a passage from Cæsar after one has done it a hundred times. Intelligence, on the other hand, is the power to size up a new problem and to bring to bear upon it the appropriate knowledge and techniques. This means that one sees in new situations not something wholly and bewilderingly new, but what one has already learned to see in other situations—the universals in the particulars. And one brings one's accumulated wisdom to bear.

Are we interested in developing this active, problem-solving kind of thinking in children and grown-ups? As over against inert knowledge-getting, it is obviously the only kind worth developing. Then apparently we must, in all our educational processes, start with problems to be solved, cases to be explored, situations to be met. Dewey long ago pointed this out in his little book, "How We Think." Most of us, he showed, think we think when we are actually not thinking at all. Just to be conscious is not necessarily to be thinking. For example, I ride in the subway for an hour. One station after the other is passed. I look into scores of faces. At the end of the hour can I set down to the credit side of my mentality an hour of thinking? Probably not a single minute. Throughout the entire journey, I was in a kind of wide-awake dream-state in which things drifted into my consciousness and drifted out. One thinks, in short, only when one is faced by a problem. If, suddenly, the train had stopped with a terrific jolt, the lights had gone out and the people had jumped up with screams and begun milling their way out, I should have begun to think. How to get out myself? How to save that boy of mine who sits next me?

Jump through a window? Or wait to see what the trouble is? On the other hand, nothing exciting might have happened, but several mulatto faces opposite me might have set me thinking about the whole puzzling problem of racial intermixture.

But if we must train for *intelligence* by presenting situations to be met, life problems to be solved, then it seems to follow that much must be changed in our so-called educating of young and old. It might be most effective to pronounce a solemn moratorium for ten years, let us say, upon the teaching of "subjects." It might be stipulated that during those ten years nothing should be taught save as the need for it arose out of some genuine situation. Study Shakespeare? Why? Study economics? Why? No one asks those questions now, because Shakespeare and economics and all the rest of the traditional subjects are firmly on the educational map. But Shakespeare, if he is to come in at all during this moratorium, must now come as a result of a need felt in a real human situation. Can such a need be found? Can Shakespeare really *help out* in any human situations? Under such conditions, the Shakespeare scholar might have to do some unaccustomed thinking about this subject. And if he did finally manage to bring his beloved master in, he would probably bring in a Shakespeare delightfully humanized, brilliantly pertinent, and shorn of most of his academic terrors.

And so with the rest of the academic furnishings. Could curricula be built up out of the *key-situations* in life, one suspects that education would not only take on a new lease of life, but would be sought after as the thing supremely worthwhile.

*Repeaters and Creators*

We have said that learning without doing is unhealthy. But there are different kinds of doing. Letting the child say his multiplication table aloud makes him, indeed, do something. But reciting a multiplication table—or, in adult life, learning to operate a key-board—essential as these are, is the kind of doing that does not get anyone very far. It is purely repetitive, standardized, cut-and-dried. It keeps one within a circumscribed compass. It is therefore essentially contractive in its effect.

Whenever, on the other hand, one solves a life-problem in a new way, one brings something novel into existence. It may be the problem of getting plants to grow in a clay soil, or forming a club, or starting a movement. When Grundtvig, the prophet of adult education, thought out and established his first folk high school in Denmark, trying thus to help solve Denmark's difficult problem, he brought something novel into existence. He broke through the closed circle of that to which his people had become habituated. He extended the boundary of the actual and widened the area of men's functioning. What he did therefore was essentially expansive in character.

All creativeness is expansive. That is why the growing interest in the schools to develop the creative impulses of the child is of such significance. When a child makes a piece of furniture, writes a poem or a play, organizes a school circus, edits a school paper, he is being carried out of himself into something which links him to his fellows and links him also to the materials which he is trying to shape to his purposes. If he is creating, he cannot possibly lead a shut-in life.

The same is true of the adult. The morbid person will invariably be found to be the person without a creative interest. Take, however the adult who carves animals, or beats brass, or composes music, or works out new chess combinations. He is not morbid. He may be silent for long intervals, but his silence is healthy. He has developed an interest in something outside himself, and so has expanded into wholesomeness of life.

We can now combine the two ideas worked out above. *Every situation which presents a problem is an invitation to create.* Recall the case of the widow and her son. What was needed there was the discovery of a solution to the problem. Once the solution was discovered, however, it meant the creation of new behaviors and new conditions—a new mother, in short, a new son, and new life-relationships.

The average person is too much accustomed to think of creation exclusively in the artistic sense. Artistic creation is, indeed, always the solution of a problem. Goethe struggles with the vague thoughts that are in him, with the passionate wish to express something which he profoundly feels about human life. Out of his struggles Faust emerges. Faust is the solution of his problem. But so the child can struggle with the wish to build a chair; the housewife with a wish to redecorate her rooms; the business man with the wish to bring about finer relations between himself and his men; the scholar to shape his thoughts into words; the statesman to bring harmony out of international discord.

And so the thought in the foregoing is rounded full-circle. Taking in, we said, without doing something with what is taken in, is unhealthy. We have noted how much of education consists of this unhealthy process, and how necessary it is to change the methods so that the growing young life

may continuously function with what it learns. We have noted this need likewise in adults. To feel emotions and do nothing creatively new is emotionally demoralizing. To hear wisdom and be exactly as unwise as before in one's active life is mentally demoralizing. Life grows by intake. But for intake there must also be output.

Has the reader noted in people emotions that simply feed on themselves, that do not "outer" themselves in action? Has he discovered certain flabbinesses in these individuals, a sentimentality or a theatricality in some, a morbidity in others? How would he have had these emotions turn themselves into some kind of action?

Has he noted a large amount of "knowledge" that is never turned into action? Has he found the schools and colleges, in large measure, productive of such knowledge? How would he suggest that the schools and colleges modify their procedures in order, as Decroly expresses it, to "teach how to live by living"?

Is his own knowledge largely by "subjects," or has he learned by tackling situations and using the subjects as aids in their solution?

If he wished to build up intelligence in a child or in an adult—as over against making the child or the adult a mere receptacle of knowledge—how would he go about it?

Does he find rather widespread the parasitic attitude toward learning described in this chapter? How would he suggest that individuals be changed from mental parasites into self-operating, productive minds?

## CHAPTER XVII

### GETTING RID OF THE POISONS

#### Elimination and Sublimation

So-called food may, as we know, happen to be not food, but poison. It may be physical poison, in which case it destroys the body-mind through the body. Or it may be psychological poison, in which case it destroys the body-mind through the mind. In either case, there is a problem: how to get rid of the poisons which have been permitted to slip in from the outside.

Poisons may also be generated by the life-processes themselves. There are the normal waste products of which the body must rid itself or disease ensues. There are likewise waste products of the mind, which, if not cast forth, remain within the body-mind as poisons.

We need not here concern ourselves with the physical poisons. Modern medicine has made us sufficiently aware of them and has developed fairly adequate techniques for their control. We shall confine ourselves to the psychological poisons, which are far less well known, but which frequently play a destroying part quite as serious as that played by physical poisons.

First as to the psychological poisons which come from the outside. We shall begin with the simplest and most obvious of them. There is, for example, evil gossip. Apparently evil gossip is as delightful and innocuous as oysters taken out of season. It is even more so, for the person who

hears it usually goes through no resultant after-agonies which apprise him of the fact that something has come in which ought, with the utmost swiftness, to go out. The evil stays in. It generates mistaken opinions, wrong attitudes; it dictates misguided action. Sometimes the evil spreads by contact, like a contagious disease. The hearer becomes, in turn, the teller, who in turn, becomes another teller; until in the end a whole group of people is infected.

Unfortunately, we have not yet advanced to the point where we can tack a yellow placard on a door: "Beware! This House is Infected by Gossip." Nor can we isolate the gossip-carrier as we now isolate the typhoid-carrier. All of which shows that we are still far less subtle about our psychological than about our physical poisons.

### *Rumor*

Rumor is a kind of social gossip. The Germans are secretly building up an army! Beware! The English are trying to get control of America! Beware! The Jews—ah the Jews! In the Middle Ages rumor had it that the Jews sacrificed babies. It was passed on from lip to lip. Finally, of course, there was no doubt whatever about it. The Jews *did* sacrifice babies, for everybody said so. And now-a-days the same old poison creeps in. The Jews are secretly planning to capture the finance of the world. Do they not all stick together? Will a Jew marry a Gentile? Did not the Dearborn Independent make charges? It is highly significant that these charges were retracted, because probably never before in history was wholesale rumor-mongering forced to so public a retraction. The rumor hound takes you by the lapel of your coat, whispers with great earnestness in your ear,

feels that he has done you an enormous service in "putting you wise," and goes on his way to find new victims.

Witch-baiting was a form that rumor-poison took a century ago. Bolshevik-baiting is one of the chief forms it takes to-day—with official departments and whole armies of eager rumor-hounds serving as the agents of destruction.

### *Manufactured Lies*

The gossip and the spreader of rumor are usually quite unaware of how ridiculous or even malicious they are. They are, for the most part, victims of wretchedly bad thinking. Also, they may be trying to get rid of some of their inhibitions. Life is fairly stale and flat for most of us. If we cannot be Lindberghs, heroically flying across the ocean, at least we can carry a tale about somebody, or frighten people over a phantom foe. Thus we bring the zest of the dramatic into our lives.

It is different with the next form of psychological toxin—manufactured lies. To take a single instance, I suppose that most of us are still suffering from the propaganda fabricated during the late war to "keep up our morale." Generations will go by before an American can feel rightly towards those who were pictured as Huns, or a German towards those whom the propaganda-makers pictured as thieves and plunderers. That is the kind of psychological poison which sinks so deeply into our system that no amount of ordinary purging gets it out. I remember a small boy who, poisoned with decayed food, developed an *ileocolitis* and almost died; he was years getting the effects of that poisoning out of his system. Apparently the same thing is true about the poisoning we underwent during the late war. In our sane



moments we know that the war was carried on in large measure by deliberately manufactured lies; and yet, although we now intellectually recognize this fact, I doubt whether, in any of the belligerent countries, the profound psychological effects of the poisoning will disappear for a long time to come.

Those manufactured lies, of course, were justified by their makers. Men in gold braid and men in frock coats passed them out to the populace with clear consciences. Instead of being ashamed of themselves, they felt they were performing a patriotic duty. The end justified the means. "War requires us to kill people. It also requires us to kill the truth." All of which again proves how unsubtle we are about psychological poisons. For it should be obvious that the killing of a million people is as nothing to the killing of one basic truth. Other people will swiftly be born to replace the million; but a falsity once deeply lodged in a populace, goes indefinitely on its devastating way. Is there ever an end great enough to justify the killing of the truth?

### *Contractives*

In all these cases, obviously, we have contractive reactions. The person who listens to gossip makes no free and generous effort to understand either the tale-bearer or the person about whom the tale is told. He takes the tale-bearer at his own valuation; he accepts the evil picture of the person about whom the tale is told, feeling no obligation to probe deeper or to inquire more widely into the facts. The person who listens to rumor likewise takes things as they come, subjecting them to no critical investigation. He, too, is superficial, resting content in a passive receptiveness. The

person who spreads lying propaganda is also a contractive. He goes the easiest way. It would be difficult for him to educate a people up to the real issues, more difficult still to make equitable adjustments in terms of the rights on all sides. Far easier to tell dramatic lies and arouse furious angers. As for those in whom the angers are aroused, they, too, for the time being, are contractives. They push off the hated foe, refuse to listen to him, refuse even to regard him as a human being like themselves. Hugging their anger, they rush forth to destroy an enemy they do not even know, an enemy built chiefly out of their own imaginings.

What can we do about it? These psychological poisons do not make us obviously ill. It is a pity that they do not, for if they did, we should long since have put our evil gossips under restraint, sequestered our rumor-mongers, and performed drastic surgical operations upon our manufacturers of lies. We may eventually develop a greater sensitiveness to the evil which lies in these psychological poisonings. "If rationality were once to become really respectable," writes Trotter, "if we feared the entertaining of an unverifiable opinion with the warmth with which we now fear using the wrong implement at the dinner table; if the thought of holding a prejudice disgusted us as does a foul disease, then the dangers of man's suggestibility would be turned into an advantage."

Perhaps the time will come when we shall face a gossip with the challenge: "Show me the facts!" Or, loosing ourselves from the grasp of the rumor, we shall fix him with an inquiring eye: "Where are the official documents to support that view?" And when the manager of a lie-factory heaves in sight, if he cannot give us chapter and verse, with

experimental verifications, we shall politely but sternly show him the door.

This will transpire only as we become determinedly scientific-minded. I recently watched a group of people, who had come with all kinds of vague notions and prejudices on race-relations, largely derived from the reading of current popular books, as they listened for an entire week to the quiet unfolding of facts by a great anthropologist. First, there was bristling up, opinionated resentment, hot talking about Nordic supremacy and other stereotyped ideas. Gradually, as the anthropologist quietly built up his array of facts, chips came off shoulders, hot resentments cooled, cherished stereotypes were voiced with less and less frequency, until at the end of the week, the whole group showed a fine spirit of seeking for facts rather than accepting the statements of popular writers on race questions.

Training, all through the community, in a scientific attitude of mind, one suspects, must be the chief prophylaxis against these psychological toxins. When that training is achieved, we shall doubtless be as careful not to admit certain kinds of ideas into our systems as we are now careful to keep out decayed foods and contaminated waters.

### *The Toxins We Generate*

The foregoing will be sufficient to make clear the type of some of the psychological poisons that come from the outside. Let us pass now to the poisons which are generated within the psychological organism.

As we know, the metabolic process cannot go on in bodies without resulting in the manufacture of a certain number of

toxins. Toxins, in other words, are inevitably generated in the life process, and one chief problem of the body, is that of handling these toxins. The body solves its problem in two ways: In the first place, it breathes fresh oxygen into the blood-stream in order to burn up the waste products of metabolism; in the second place, having digested what is of value in its food, it casts out the rest.

Do the psychological processes likewise inevitably result in the manufacture of toxins, and is one chief problem of the psychological organism also that of disposing of its self-generated poisons? The answer, I think, is in the affirmative. The mental and emotional processes result in by-products which, if not disposed of rightly, become poisons in the psychological make-up. Let us note a number of these.

There is first the type of toxin which results when an idea, once excellent and serviceable, remains unchanged with the change of life conditions. Here the situation brought about is analogous to the condition of venous blood when no fresh oxygen is inhaled to burn up the waste products. An example of this is found among Marxian socialists. Marx's ideas, despite their lurking errors, were of powerful value in illuminating the economic and social situation a generation ago. The errors in his view were practically inevitable because of the undeveloped economic conditions of the time at which he wrote; they were negligible, however, because of the unreadiness of the world to put his system into operation. But the world has changed. Many of Marx's prophecies were not fulfilled. The errors in his view have been increasingly revealed. Also, the world has taken so powerful a move forward that the direct application of Marxianism with all its errors would bring disaster. What, now, does the dyed-in-the-wool Marxian do? Does he take a deep

breath of the new ideas which would burn away much that is waste product for the present day and generation? Not at all. He hangs on to his pious Marxianism, unaware of the fact that in a world which never stands still, an idea which stands still carries with it the menace of decay, becoming, in short, the "unchanged body of death."

A similar case is that of the Constitution-worshipper. The American Constitution, serving its purpose excellently in an isolated agricultural community a hundred years ago, has, in many of its aspects, been outgrown. But his sense of loyalty prevents the Constitution-worshipper from taking a deep breath and burning away what is now waste product. Another example is that of the orthodox religionist. He hangs on to ideas serviceable at a time when the whole cosmological, sociological, and psychological outlook were different. In refusing to inhale the oxygen of new ideas, he breeds religious poisons that are a menace to our outlook upon human life.

### *Casting Out*

The body also needs constantly to cast out the unusable part of its food-supply. There is need in the psychological life for this same casting out of matter which, if it remains, becomes toxic.

Here, for example, is a woman who has lost her son. Somewhere in her life it must have been impressed upon her that grief for a beloved is a sacred thing and that to put grief away is disloyal to the memory of the departed. So, for more than ten years now, she has been a grief-stricken woman. Her husband aids and abets her. "She never can forget," he says. Her friends approach her with silent sym-

pathy. Those of them who are of the same emotional cast, expect her to be sad of face. They would be shocked if she should take up life vigorously again, become absorbed in an interest, and show that spirit which betokens release from self-centered broodings.

It would seem cruel to tell that woman that she is simply breeding inner poisons, that absorption in her grief, furthermore, is an absorption not in her son but in herself. Apparently, she has not learned the art of extracting the vitalizing element of a grief and casting out the useless remainder.

What is the vitalizing element in grief? Paradoxically enough, grief, and the possibility of it, are what make life precious. The knowledge that we cannot hold on forever to those we love makes us hold them all the more dearly. Grief, therefore, has profound value. Without it, we should doubtless be callous, self-centered creatures. If, then, a grief makes us actually more self-centered, it has apparently missed its function. We are in that case like the Russian woman of whom William James wrote: we are simply feeding on our own doleful but self-satisfying emotions. A great grief, apparently, should be our cue not to contract ourselves to the pin-point of seclusive brooding but to expand in interest and in sympathy for others. So we might again speak in the manner of James and say: "When you have a grief, do something worthwhile that you probably would not otherwise have done." Or, if that seems a little artificial, we can at least continue with greater intensity at our jobs.

Similar to the storing up of sorrow is the storing up of disappointment. A person has made a failure. He broods over it by day, spends sleepless nights thinking about it. This obviously depletes his health and diminishes his chance of future success. He, too, needs to extract the vitalizing ele-

ment of his failure and to cast out the useless remainder. How? By deliberately finding out in accurate detail why he failed, and making up his mind not to let that sort of thing happen again. Then he can fling the whole thing over his left shoulder and be free to go on.

### *Fears and Rages*

We need not elaborate upon the fears and the rages that debilitate. An honest, life-preserving fear, as we have already shown, is necessary; likewise an honest, self-preserving rage. It is the retention of useless fears and rages that debilitates—of the worries that do no good, the indecisions that hold us suspended in doubt, the fears lest we fall one jot or tittle short of perfection, the irritable rages at trifles, the bitternesses, envies, hatreds. All these are perfectly useless, and, kept in the body-mind system, breed various diseases. The wholesome body-mind clears them all out.

Sometimes, however, it is not easy to cast off these fears and rages. Here, for example, is an employee who has been publicly reprimanded by his foreman. His anger flares up, but he dares not reply. He is afraid of losing his job. Hence he represses the strong fear-*rage* emotion, and it remains stored up within him. That night, he may snap back at his wife, or angrily send his child to bed for some minor misdemeanor. If the trouble with his foreman goes on for days and weeks, and he still must suppress his anger-*fear* emotion, he may become literally unbearable at home. His digestion may go wrong, which will make him still less bearable. He may have fits of deep depression following fits of anger. His blood-pressure may go up. Dizzy spells may come upon him. Fright about himself may now be added to his anger at

his foreman. This again will increase his digestive disorder. His blood-pressure will mount higher. His kidneys may go wrong. He may have heart palpitations. And so the unhappy process may continue.

Such a case is not at all uncommon. It occurs, in greater or less degree, wherever a strong emotion has no outlet for expression. Our knowledge of what occurs here has now been placed upon a firm physiological foundation by the discoveries in endocrinology. Dr. Walter B. Cannon's work <sup>1</sup> on the relation of the glandular system to emotional excitement was epoch-making in showing the close connection between suppressed fears and rages and the production of poisons in the organism. Let us suppose that a person is strongly enraged or in great fear. The adrenal glands are stimulated to heightened activity. Adrenal secretion is introduced into the blood stream. As a result, the blood is withdrawn from the cranial and intestinal regions and pumped into the running and fighting muscles. The organism, in short, is put into a condition either to fight or to escape. If, now, the individual does fight or does use his legs to run away, the glandular secretion is consumed in the muscular processes. But if there are no muscular processes, if the raging creature must stand mute and unresisting before his tormentor, or the frightened creature must move no limb, it is exactly like taking food into the stomach and being unable to digest it. The food then becomes poison. The same thing apparently happens with the glandular secretions. Only vigorous muscular action—the expressing of the emotion, in other words—can properly “digest” it. Hence, when all action must of necessity be suppressed, the glandular secretion, unutilized, becomes a poison in the system.

<sup>1</sup> *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*, 1916.



A wholesome technique of life, we are beginning to discover, lies in learning how to find some effective outlet of expression for our strong emotions. The man in the case just cited might have decided to train himself for a higher position. Or he might have studied his foreman and learned how to win him over. Or he might even have taken stock of himself and mended his own ways. Whatever he did, he should have tried to find relief in some effective way for his pent-up feelings.

### *Complete suppressions*

This brings us to a type of problem which has in recent years attracted a great deal of attention among clinicians and laity. I refer to those suppressions of the emotions which are so complete that a person is himself not aware that he has made a suppression. He only knows that he has symptoms. These may involve a deep depression, or a sense of frustration, or a condition of being all tied up in a hard knot, or mysterious phobias, or baffling obsessions. I need not elaborate, for there is a large and rapidly growing literature covering the subject. What is of interest at present, however, is to note how the psychoanalytic technique used in dealing with such symptoms is related to the underlying idea which we have been developing in these chapters.

The technique used is simply a process of *talking out the suppression*. First, of course, there must be a discovery of the suppressed emotion and of its causation. That, in itself, involves weeks, sometimes months, of talking oneself out. It is highly significant that the patient at the beginning is not always capable of doing this. He usually comes with all kinds of resistances which need to be broken down. He is

locked up tight within his self-consciousness. He will talk about surface things, but not about his more intimate self. He shrinks from exposing his mind. He is bashful, constrained, often resentful. He pushes the inquirer off.

He is, in brief, typically contractive. Nothing can happen in the way of psychological assistance until he can let himself go. He must learn to express his thoughts with utter freedom. When that condition is achieved, the relief begins. The patient expands, grows confident, becomes buoyant in the opening of his tight-locked self. He changes from a defensive, fear-obsessed, self-depleting contractive into an open, confident, self-releasing expansive.

The process is, of course, not completed by the mere discovery of the suppressed element. The discovery is a far step towards a cure, but after it is made, the hitherto isolated, suppressed element must be brought into livable relation with the rest of the personality. It must be effectively interwoven with the entire functioning life. This is the process called re-education.

### *Unsatisfied Desires*

There is, finally, another form of psychological poison which is baffling to rid ourselves of. I refer to that condition of suppressed desire which results when certain basic impulses must go unsatisfied. A typical example is the unmarried woman of marriageable age. In recent years we have been provided with a term to use in her behalf. "Sublimate," we say. As often as not she makes a wry face at that. "Easy to say," she answers, "but difficult to do."

Doubtless she is right. Sublimating a profound hunger for marriage and children—finding another way in which

that hunger may be appeased—is not done with a sweep of the hand. Perhaps, however, it may help if we view this sublimating process a little more broadly.

We think of sublimation as a special process needful in special cases like the above. As a matter of fact, we must all sublimate. Let us regard for a moment our sex-power. In animal life, the sex-energy is used for the production of a number of offspring who never live to maturity. Because of this high death-rate, nature requires the animal to energize to the full capacity of its sex nature. It is different with human beings. No one of us energizes to the full capacity of his nature. There is therefore in each of us far more sex-energy than is actually put to use. What do we do with it?

What we might do, of course, is to go on using it by thinking of practically nothing but sex, living practically nothing but sex. When we do behave that way, however, we are regarded as sex-perverts afflicted with erotomania. Why? Because the conditions of civilized life require that we deliberately restrain our sex hungers.

Suppose we do restrain our sex hungers. We have, then, surplus energies which can be put to use in other ways. No doubt our sociological psychologists are right in their assertion that the high development of the arts and sciences is directly traceable to the release of energy resulting from the rigorous restraint we place upon our sex appetites.

Apparently, our sexual energies are not narrowly specific. They do not, in other words, have to function merely in a sex way. If they did, such surplus sex-energy would simply go to waste, or would remain as a maddening irritant in our lives. Probably an energy like sex, which is available for a specific function, can, if unutilized, be turned to other uses. We have an illustration of this in the case of two other

primitive impulses—fear and rage. Among animals, fear is wholly a life-preserving function which operates by the process, potential or actual, of running away or of fighting in self-defense. Now, very little of that primitive type of fear functions in our civilized life. Nevertheless the fear-functioning still persists; only *it does so in transformed ways*. We fear committing a vulgarity, fear using the wrong fork, fear the deterioration of our ideals. Here the fear has been transformed both as to its process (running away) and its objective (preserving life). But the fear-feeling nevertheless remains.

The same is true of rage. Primitively, rage is for physical aggression. But in civilized life there is little of that kind of rage. Rage, however, has not disappeared, although its processes (hitting, biting, etc.) and its objective (potential killing) have been wholly transformed, as when, for example, I rage at the narrowness of religious bigotry.

The same substitutional process may take place in sex. The primitive sex-process involves physical copulation; the primitive sex-objective, contact with a creature of the opposite sex. But the so-called love-feeling can remain although the primitive process and objectives of that love disappear.

That is what Jung meant by the word *libido*. It seemed to him that there was something more essential in sex-energizing than the mere physical processes and objectives. The essential was any attitude of approach, of satisfaction-in-the-other (wholly different from the withdrawing attitude of fear or the aggressive attitude of rage).

This it is which can be satisfied even when the primitive forms of sex cannot be satisfied. And it is this other form of satisfaction that all of us in one way or another seek and get. The scientist loves his experimentation, the botanist

his botanizing, the medical man his diagnostic work, the teacher his teaching, the business man his financial undertakings. We get our human satisfactions, in short, when we find that to which we can attach ourselves, that to which we can yield our interest and devotion. Nor is it a mere metaphor when we say a man is wedded to his profession or his art.

We all know the too-much-married man. He has few interests outside the primitive sex-gratifications revolving about his wife. We all know the wife who spends most of her time making herself attractive for her husband. She, too, has no time left for wider satisfaction. And we all know the philanderer, whose one emotion centers in the physical bodies of women. These persons are little more than human-coated animals. Sex for them is sex in its most primitive form.

There is, then, apparently a profound need that we transform our sex-energies into wider loves and interests. That gives us our clue for the unmarried woman. We need not for a moment make light of the fact that a deeply vitalizing experience is missed when she does not marry. There is the actual relationship she misses which is physically and mentally wholesome. There is also missed the expansion of her life into mate and children. But all has not been lost when they are lost. It is only when we regard sex in its narrowly primitive form that such a conclusion is reached. As a matter of fact, most of our life must be lived with the kind of loves that are not sexual. The problem of the unmarried woman, under the abnormal conditions to which she is subjected, is to find these other loves and interests.

Sublimation, then, is the lot of all of us. Nay, it should be called our privilege. The object of all civilized life, married

and unmarried, must be to find its great sublimated interests. When these are found most of the bitterness of unappeased desires disappears.

We inoculate against typhoid, small-pox, and the rest. Can we inoculate, so to speak, against evil gossip, rumor, and manufactured lies? How early can this process begin? And how best can it be accomplished?

Are there any ways in which the entertaining of an unverifiable opinion or the holding of a prejudice can be made to seem disgusting to the holders? Or, to put it the other way around, are there any ways in which rationality can be made really respectable?

Are there views in law, politics, sex-life, education, religion which need, so to speak, to have the fresh air of new ideas burn away their falsities? Is the reader acquainted with idea-reverencers, or institution-reverencers who keep their mental systems clogged up with what ought long since to have been purged away? Is he acquainted with persons who nurse their griefs or failures, who seem, in fact, almost to take a delight in brooding over them? What might be done to clean up the psychological systems of such individuals?

To what extent can the psychoanalytic technique of talking oneself out until one gets to the source of one's difficulties be utilized in normal life? Has the reader succeeded in talking himself out by himself, or has he found that he must have someone else towards whom he can direct his mind, and in whom he can expand himself?

To what extent is it possible to appease the great primitive appetites by the process of sublimating? Is the reader puzzled by the fact that human life does not permit of the full

indulgence of these appetites? Is this just cruel necessity, or is there apparently a reason? Does human life, as a matter of fact, succeed in its progressive evolution by largely transforming its primitive objectives into others less primitive? Or does this whole matter of primitive appetites still remain an unsolved mystery?

CHAPTER XVIII  
HE WHO LAUGHS

Humor and the Expansive Emotions

We are now in a position to make an important application of the principles thus far developed. Humor has remained the mystery child in psychology. Volumes have been written about it; but when we have read them all, despite the acuteness of much of their analysis, we still seem to be left in the dark as to the exact part which humor plays in our psychological life. We are often led to feel that humor, whatever it is, is a gift of the gods. It is something of which, if we have it, we are excessively proud. And if we have it not, we pretend that we have it.

I have no thought whatever of finally resolving all the perplexities regarding humor. Nevertheless, I am convinced that through the analysis made in the foregoing chapters, we gain an illuminating insight into the nature of humor and its possible value in life. "'Twas the saying of an ancient sage that humor was the only test of gravity, and gravity of humor." There has been altogether too great a tendency to regard humor as a kind of pleasant by-play in life, something for our lighter moments. We have been accustomed to associate humor only with jokes, funny papers, the vaudeville stage, and the hilarity of after-dinner speeches.

This attitude has diverted our attention from qualities in humor which are deeply significant for the building up



of a strong psychological constitution. More especially, it has prevented us from turning a clinical eye upon the problem of the humorless. We make jokes about the humorless. But if we happen to be blessed with such a person in the family or office, the joke sometimes loses its flavor. It is significant that a lack of humor is found to be an outstanding characteristic in a large number of cases of psychological abnormality. Whether it is cause or effect is, of course, the problem. It is also highly significant that in practically all cases of insanity, the sense of humor seems to be completely lacking. There may be excitability, hectic gaiety, a rapid, absorbed enthusiasm, but never humor.

Is humorlessness, then, a serious psychological defect? Is it a curable defect? It is strange that we have tried in no effective way to find an answer to either of these questions. We have clinics for backward children; clinics for dull normals and clinics for hyper-excitables; clinics for neurotics and psychotics; clinics for the love-sick and clinics for those who cannot love; clinics for teeth and clinics for glands. But we have no clinics for the humorless.

And yet, even as I write this, I am estopped. One of the most delightfully philosophic of our humorists has suddenly grown soured on humor. Heywood Broun throws down the gauntlet to all the inveterate jokers.

"Humor is the coward's livery. . . . For generally we laugh at the things we are afraid to face and fight. If the story of Peter in the high priest's house were more detailed, we should probably find that some funny remark accompanied his denial of association with Christ. Peter made a joke of the charge, and there was superb irony in the crowing of the cock, for that sound came hard on the heels of the apostate's cackle.

"Hell is paved not with good intentions but with wise-cracks.

None of the vital men and women who have ever lived could see a joke. They were too intent upon the sight of things at which one cannot and should not smile.

"Humor is grit in the evolutionary process. 'Does it matter?' is the underlying mood in almost every expression of humor. And, of course, it does matter.

"'Oh, he takes himself too seriously,' is the standardized reproach set up to tangle the feet of all marching men.

"The heart's breath which is needed to keep going on when the taste of blood is in the mouth can easily be dissipated in a laugh. Of course, there are situations in which humor eases tension. People can and do forget their troubles when the clowns perform. But I can't see that this is a signal service. Troubles are not solved by the simple process of forgetting them. I've never seen one laid except by those who had the nerve to keep boring in and swinging, and the man said to be worthwhile who can smile when everything goes dead wrong is a quitter who is just about ready to heave in a sponge and make a jest of all his tribulations. . . .

"When the sense of humor is very strongly developed something else must be atrophied. People who laugh a great deal are not truly quick but are actually unimaginative. No man who uses his eyes to observe all the things which lie within his range of vision can possibly avoid the conclusion, 'What is there to laugh at?'"

### *Evasion Again*

Broun has here made a psychological point of no small importance. We have been noting the subtle ways in which the human being manages to evade an issue. He pushes off the disagreeable; he goes into tantrums; he builds up delusions of grandeur; he excuses himself, pities himself, rationalizes about himself. Now we have him in his most delightful and deceptive mood. He runs away—but with a joke on his lips.

Before we decide anything about the invigorating, up-building character of humor, we must admit the above type of humor to our list. We shall call it *evasional humor*.

Here, again, as so often, we have a perversion of a good thing. As we have already seen, reason, when used for self-deception, becomes rationalizing or wish-thinking; ego-feeling, when it refuses to face the facts and overcome obstacles, becomes paranoiac delusion; an inferiority sense, when it runs away from making itself really superior, becomes day-dreaming, or snobbishness, or boasting. So humor, when it is uncourageous, becomes the evasional humor of the inveterate, wise-cracking slacker.

We have not yet come to the point where we place the evasional humorist in restraint and attempt to cure him. But that we may yet do. I recall an outstanding case. If he had not been so diverting an individual, so constantly on the alert with his keen wit, he would have been regarded as a case for serious treatment. For he was a failure. He could do nothing in his studies. His college life was one fatal flunk after another. But where someone else would have been in the dolefullest dumps and would either have buckled down or made a graceful exit, this young fellow took it out in joking. No one could penetrate to his serious nature, for he almost instantly turned any remark into a joke. At table he was a delight—and a subtle demoralization. He seemed to be most stimulating; but on retrospect it was clear that his presence completely put the minds of the others off their normal balance. No remark which had any meaning or which logically led anywhere could be made, but he would turn it with a swift sally. The result was that such remarks ceased to be made. No one dared—or wished—to carry on a logical conversation, knowing too well that every idea would

be roared into silly death. The result was, of course, a condition of endless, purposeless wise-cracking. That man killed his own mental powers; and he most effectively did what he could to kill the mental powers of those with whom he associated.

Let me point to one other instance. At a certain public dinner, a number of distinguished men had been invited to speak on "The Future of America." One after another got up, made elaborate pretenses that he knew nothing about the subject, told some funny stories, cracked some jokes, and sat down. At the end of the evening, when this solemn writer counted up his blessings, he realized that every single speaker, with two courageous exceptions, had side-stepped the issue. Not that they were afraid of the issue. They were men of outstanding power. The only reason the writer could assign was that they were afraid of breaking a terrorizing convention. It had become a convention that after-dinner speeches should be funny; not to be somewhat hilarious would be to write oneself down a bore. Hence, with an eager audience in front of them waiting for something worth hearing, these timid great ones deliberately ran away, wagging their jokes behind them.

Evasional humor, then, falls into the pattern of the psychoneurotic, where we should firmly place it whenever we find it. And if it happens to be one of our own pet ways of covering up our lack of courage, we can cease congratulating ourselves upon our fine sense of humor and admit our cowardice in being clever.

### *We Play*

But not all humor is evasional. Far from it. There is first of all the humor of pure playfulness. Watch the children

pouring out of school. They come running, shouting and laughing. Obviously they are in a condition of a sudden release from strain. They are no longer bent over desks, concentrated upon a task. The lid is off; and their reserve energies pour forth into a joyous expansiveness.

The play-spirit, as it relaxes, socializes. These children call to each other, play tricks on each other, like each other tremendously. Note, now, one little girl. She walks by herself. Her arms hang stiffly at her side. Her eyes are on the ground. She pushes through the crowd of laughing children, speaking to no one. Apparently she has met with a rebuff. She is on the point of tears. No relaxation; no social feeling; no joyous expansiveness.

We note, then, in the simple form of playfulness, how the expansive reactions predominate, and how, in the absence of playfulness, there is a certain contractiveness of reaction.

Much of our reading and hearing of jokes is of this same purposeless, playful nature. The jokes release us from the strain of our concentrations. Concentrations are good, but like all good things they may be overdone. A timely joke breaks in upon our centeredness, expands it into a laugh, and, if we are with others, swings a momentary bridge of fellowship between ourselves and them. That is why the man who can never see a joke is so often an unsocial creature. He does not know how to break into play. He is able only to concentrate upon something that has "meaning" or is "useful." How often we hear him say: "I don't see anything funny about that." He cannot let himself loose in sheer foolery.

Play is good. Even sheer purposelessness is good. It preserves the healthy rhythm of life—of concentration and release from concentration. It serves, so to speak, to stretch

our emotional muscles, to expand our too much centered attention, invigorating, socializing, and sending us back to our concentrations with an added zest.

*Critical Humor*

There is a large range of humor which is far from being purely playful. It is purposeful. It means to point something out. It has a laugh on its lips but a clear, canny thought in its brain. Note the delightful penetration of the following poem of James Jeffery Roche:

“From the madding crowd they stand apart,  
The maidens fair and the Work of Art.

And none might tell from sight alone,  
In which had Culture ripest grown—

The Gotham Million, fair to see,  
The Philadelphia pedigree,

The Boston Mind of azure hue,  
Or the soulful soul from Kalamazoo—

For all loved Art in a seemly way,  
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

. . . . .  
Long they worshipped, but no one broke  
The sacred stillness, until up spoke

The western one from the nameless place,  
Who blushing said, ‘What a lovely vace!’

Over three faces a sad smile flew,  
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.

But Gotham's haughty soul was stirred  
To crush the stranger with one small word.

Deftly hiding reproof in praise,  
She cries, 'Tis indeed a lovely vase!

But brief her unworthy triumph when  
The lofty one from the house of Penn,

With the consciousness of two grandpas,  
Exclaims, 'It is quite a lovely vase!'

And glances round with an anxious thrill,  
Awaiting the word of Beacon Hill.

But the Boston maid smiles courtesee,  
And gently murmurs, 'Oh, pardon me!

'I did not catch your remark, because  
I was so entranced with that lovely vase!'

This is obviously more than mere foolery. It is a laughing criticism of the little conceits, the provincial linguistic prides, the half-concealed, half-revealed wish to display a Culture that is still too new to be quite comfortable and real.

Or take the rollicking

"I am the very pattern of a modern Major General;  
I've information vegetable, animal and mineral;  
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical,  
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical.  
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical;  
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical.  
About binomial theorems I'm teeming with a lot of news,

With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.  
I'm very good at integral and differential calculus;  
I know the scientific names of beings animalculus.  
In short, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,  
I am the very model of a modern Major General."

Could a laugh be more devastating in its revelation of preposterous incongruity? Humor of this sort is a keen juxtaposing of incongruities. Ordinarily we can live with incongruities in ourselves and not know that we are inwardly incongruous; for we have a masterly way—dissociation, we now call it—of not letting the right hand know what the left hand doeth. We can, for example, be a modern Major General, and also be filled with completely useless knowledge; we can have no real culture and at the same time act as if we had it. Humor brings the incongruous elements out into the open, sets them face to face with each other. And because incongruities cannot survive the frank exposure, humor sweeps them away in a laugh.

Hazlitt writes that man is the only animal that laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they ought to be.

Now what does this kind of humor really do? An incongruity is something that does not fit in with something else. If the incongruities are in ourselves, it means that we have two or more elements in us which do not belong together. What should be done about it? Obviously, the two or more incongruous elements must be so modified that they can live together. This means that each must be taken out of its isolation and regarded in terms of the other.

What, however, does this mean but that each element



must be expanded into the life of the whole of us? Humor of this type, then, is expansive in its effect. By confronting one element in us, or in society, with an incongruous other, it forces a readjustment, a broadening out, an integration.

And that, again, is why the humorless person is our despair. He has no sense of incongruities. If he is an ardent patriot, he cannot smell the oil in the patriotism he is defending. If he is a fanatic religionist, he cannot sense the incongruity between his religion of love and his own fierce hatreds. If he is a prohibitionist, he cannot realize the inconsistency between his love of the virtuous life and his furious attempt to commandeer virtue by law. If he could see beyond the thing that absorbs him, if he could develop that expansiveness of view which takes in all the discrepant factors, he would break into a laugh. His humor would make him human.

### *Self-critical Humor*

We pass now to a type of humor which is as profoundly essential as anything in our life. Many of us can laugh at incongruities—outside ourselves. We are quick to respond to a joke; we can laugh uproariously at a funny story. But with regard to ourselves, we are humorless. Perhaps it is for the development of this kind of humor that our clinic will be most needed.

Let us take a typical situation. A husband is quarreling violently with his wife. Consider the organic condition of these two. Their muscles are tense, their voices sharp; each is wholly concentrated upon his own grievance; neither deigns to listen to the other long enough to let a whole sentence come through.

Suppose now that an understanding psychologist should enter the room, and, sensing the situation, should proceed to therapeutic measures.

"My dear Mr. and Mrs. Blank," he might say, "we have agreed, you know, that this kind of organic tenseness is all wrong. Now, Mr. Blank, you first. Relax those arm muscles of yours. That's right. Limp. Limp. Now, your neck muscles. Drop the head on the chest. Limp. Limper. That's fine! Now the body muscles. Now the leg muscles. Down, down—now flat on the floor. That's it. Lie back—arms way out. Relax—fine! Now you, Mrs. Blank."

The supposition is quite fantastic. But it is obvious that if Mr. and Mrs. Blank were thus amenable and could be induced to lay themselves out limp in the cause of psychological science, the quarrel would end. Why? For the simple reason that a quarrel involves a contractive condition, while relaxation is essentially expansive. The two conditions cannot possibly co-exist. Hence, if relaxation can by any means be induced, the contractive tenseness vanishes.

I am not suggesting this as the most approved way of handling quarrels; there are doubtless far more intelligent ways. But I do wish to maintain that no quarrel is properly solved unless for the tensely contractive condition there is substituted a condition of more or less generous expansiveness. That is why it is so delightful to make up afterwards.

Now the completely humorless person is unable, in a moment of intense contractiveness, to switch suddenly into the expansive mood. The self-critically humorous person is able to do this. Is it possible to train ourselves to this salutary switching from contractive to expansive?

The contractive moods that affect us as individuals are chiefly moods of anger and fear. They are found also in

milder and sometimes mixed forms—disgust, discouragement, sadness, timidity, bitterness and envy. Suppose we have been taught to recognize these as contractive moods. Suppose also that we have been taught that the presence of a contractive mood should be the signal for a switching to an expansive mood. Then, when we are in the contractive mood, let us say, of the angry quarreler, we may suddenly bethink ourselves. "Aha, contractive again. Switch over!"

Of course, it is fatal to be *told* to switch over, as when one's opponent remarks that one had best recover one's sense of humor. But to make the switch oneself, is to gain a fine sense of power and at the same time to resolve the conflict.

Let me illustrate with a case of discouragement. A young man—married, two children—has been dismissed from his job. The situation calls for a good deal of dolefulness. Mild starvation is in sight, not to speak of the inevitable shame with which he must face his family during his days or weeks of idleness. It should not be surprising, therefore, if the young man appears before his wife that night with a glum face. "Sorry, Jane, but we are in for it now. Fired. Yes, I knew it was coming. There's no justice in this world. . . . No, I am not hungry; you eat with the kids. I will go upstairs." Neat little husband to live with!

Compare him with a friend of mine. He, too, was discharged, and things looked black. He opened the front door, face beaming. "Helen," he called. Helen came. "Sorry to break the good news, old girl. You won't mind, will you? I've been fired—lifted—kicked out—and all the little family's now gwine to starve. Helen, old girl, let's go out to the Ritz and celebrate!" It happens that my friend has a wife who can match his humor; and so the Ritz it was. Suppose

she had been humorless. "Oh, Tom, don't be silly. Do you think I could eat a *thing* knowing what's ahead of us?"

Or take the case of fear. A timid young man enters a roomful of gay people. He is late, and he feels that every eye is upon him. The blushes are creeping up to his ears; his voice is stuck somewhere below his larynx. He wants to rush out of that room. Actually he makes incipient edgings towards the friendly hallway.

Then his psychological training comes to his rescue. Contractive, is he? Switch over! He goes up to a girl, "You know, Miss Mills," he says, "I am so scared, if you don't let me hide behind you, I'll run away."

We need not elaborate farther. The reader can easily imagine situations, or find them, in which the various contractive emotions prevail. As he studies these situations it will become obvious that what we call having a sense of humor *regarding one's self* is nothing more nor less than the power to switch from a contractive mood to an expansive.

Humor, then, is not necessarily a gift of the gods. It may even—when it is of the evasional kind—be an evil in disguise. But when it is sheer playfulness, or when it has the power to see incongruities in juxtaposition, or when it can turn us upon ourselves and swing us into more generous attitudes, it is a supremely health-giving and joy-bringing power we all love to possess. The secret of humor, however, lies in the basic distinction we have made between the two kinds of organic reactions. And, therefore, we have cause to believe that in direct proportion as expansive reactions are cultivated in all the areas of our life, our sense of humor can be broadened and deepened.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE INTERCREATING MIND

#### The Individual and the Group Process

“How pitiful are little folk—  
They seem so very small;  
They look at stars, and think they are  
Denominational.”

There is a type of expansiveness of which no mention has thus far been made. It is, however, of supreme significance. I refer to that type in which the individual unites, in the profoundest kind of understanding, with something or someone other than himself.

First, there is the typical scientist. Hegel described the scientist aptly by saying of him that he sinks himself in the object. He goes out from himself, seeks to unite with something that is out there in the thing or life he is studying. He divests himself as far as possible of his personal equation, intrudes nothing of his private self, lets the object tell him what it has to tell. Thus what he generates comes not simply out of himself, but out of the joint relation between himself and his object.

In the second place, there is the typical scholar. Books are his friends. He goes out from himself to unite with something in them that is vitally significant. If he is an unreliable scholar, he will inject himself into his books, mis-

read them and so misjudge them. But if he is a trustworthy scholar, he places his mind at their service, and, even though he may disagree with them, tries at least to understand them. Thus he, too, when he produces, produces not out of himself alone, but out of the joint relationship between himself and those envolved friends.

There is also a third type. It is the person who seeks to unite with other living minds. I am not referring to that ordinary kind of person who seeks union for the sake of personal comfort, for a chance to pour himself out, for the pleasure of a passing converse, or placidly to absorb. The person I am now describing is different. He seeks union on the basis of understanding. He goes out to the other mind—sincerely, searchingly—tries so to comprehend it that the two, in a sense, become one. As a consequence, something significant happens. He comes back to himself in a measure changed. For out of that contact with the other mind, something new has been brought to birth. If the second mind is of like nature, if it, too, seeks to unite, then the most fruitful of all human relationships is entered into. Each stimulates the other to response; each helps to bring to birth ideas and interests that would doubtless never have been born in either singly. There takes place, in short, what might be called an intercreating process. It is this process upon which, as this book draws to a close, I should like to lay especial stress. For it is one whose value, I think, has not as yet been sufficiently realized. All three types above mentioned, do, of course, in a sense, intercreate. The third differs from the others, however, in one significant respect—it generates a living, comprehending response. The astronomer, for example, studies the movements of a planet. What he discovers makes no impression upon the planet. The latter

goes on its way in complete unconcern. The scholar reads his Kant. He struggles with him; sweats mental blood over him; blesses or curses him. But Kant, in his crabbed print, makes no reply. To be sure, the laboratory scientist may cause his chemical reagent or his creature to do something. But neither the reagent nor the creature, in so doing, deliberately and understandingly adjusts itself to the laboratory technician. The doing is imposed.

Thus, significant as the scientific and the scholarly processes are, they are carried on without the effective participation of the "other." The initiative and the planning all come from one side.

It is different with the third type of mind above described. The "other" is a living person, who does not simply take orders. He consciously reacts—perhaps quite unexpectedly. His reaction may require the first person to modify his point of view. Thus modified, the latter may try again, this time perhaps modifying the "other." Thus there tends to go on a mutually modifying process, a kind of progressive creation of new ideas or points of view. Only where minds confront living minds in a conscious process of give and take, can there be this type of *progressive or serial creation*.

### *The Opposite Types*

Let us examine this intercreating type by contrast. Consider the bore. This particular one is a fairly brilliant person who has been assigned to you as your partner at dinner. He starts to talk; keeps on talking. He has been to Abyssinia lately. You hear all about Abyssinia. He had several encounters with the natives. You hear all about the encounters. You ought, of course, to be grateful for not being

required to say a single word yourself. Instead, in the intervals in which you "come to," you wonder when the interminable pouring forth will cease.

There is another type of bore, the non-self-starter. He sits limp. Usually he has a pleasant, placid face, untroubled of the world. He waits for you to begin something. If you do, it is gratefully received and noted down. Then he waits for some more; and you again begin something. Again it is gratefully received and noted down. You keep hoping that the next thing you say will arouse his own mind into action. But it never does. At the end of an hour, you are still searching about desperately for some possible remark to awaken in him one independent idea. At the end of an eternity, he rises to go: "It has been a very pleasant evening."

Then there is the exceedingly polite person. He is immaculate in his conversational manner. Everything you say is courteously taken in. He responds with the elegance of a Chesterfield. But you never get beneath his skin, never stir in him a real glow of response. And he never intends for a moment to do anything so gross as to get beneath your skin or stir a response in you. So, to the end, he carries his perfect manner; and as you usher him forth, you long to do something crude and brutal.

What makes a bore a bore? The answer would seem to be quite simple. A bore is one who is never able to place himself at *your* point of interest. He is altogether a pourer-out, or altogether a taker-in, or he is courteously neutral. He is never one who goes forth to meet your interest, consider it, help modify it, build it up, or understandingly tear it down. Thus he is the extreme opposite of the intercreating type of mind.

The sermonizer is usually in grave danger of becoming a



monologue-mind. He stands in his authoritative pulpit, utters the veritable word. Then he descends to shake the hands of his congregation. They tell him how much they enjoyed his sermon. He beams; they beam. And unless he is singularly sensitive to the unspoken reactions of his audience, he waxes in smug content. I know of one congregation, however, which regularly forgathered after the service for a half hour's discussion of the sermon. The minister was always present and keenly joined in. He acknowledged that it was one of the most enlivening experiences in his whole ministry. He was enabled, in short, to become an intercreating mind.

There is a type of professor—more frequently found in Europe than in America—who reads his lectures. He has read the same lectures for many years. The pages are thumbed and worn. Occasionally there sits in front of him a student who takes no notes because he has in his possession the notes turned over to him by his father. Fundamentally different in mental outlook is another type of teacher. He is conducting his course in sociology. He firsts goes over the whole field with his students, gets them to shape up the major problems. Then he and they together thresh out these major problems. Together they formulate their conclusions; set them down in black and white; have them printed. The following year, these printed conclusions are handed on to the next class, who use them as a point of departure for their own research. In this next class, again, teacher and students shape their conclusions, perhaps modifying those previously reached. These again are formulated and printed. And so the process goes on. In the first case cited, inter-creating is almost non-existent; in the second case, it is the very heart of the process.

There is, again, the opinionated person. He has his mind

all made up. He *knows*. "Don't tell *me*," he says. And if you are wise, you don't.

Then there is the intellectual snob. One meets him frequently on occasions when an effort is being made to change from lecture to discussion. He comes up to you—if you are the speaker—with a mixture of distress and scorn in his voice. "I didn't come here to listen to Jones and Smith talk. I came to hear *you*." He considers himself vastly superior to Jones and Smith. There is nothing that he wants to know about them or from them. "Thank God, professor," he implies, "that you and I are not as these others. Next time won't you try to keep those creatures quiet?"

A careful scrutiny of individuals will, I think, prove that if people are disagreeable or tiresome or vapid or mentally fixated, there is a high probability that they do not possess this that we have called the intercreating quality of mind.

### *Coming Back to the Type*

Consider, now, this parent. Throughout the years, he has tried to carry on the intercreating process with his children. At nineteen his son faces a difficult problem. The son's first impulse is not to brood over it, to get into despair about it all by himself, or to hunt up some crony of his own age for comfort or advice. He takes his problem home. Why? Because during most of the nineteen years of his life, he has been talked with as man to man. His opinions have been respected. He has been permitted to "answer back." He has even at times had the rare delight of having his parent confess that the son was in the right.

Or consider this physician. He does not look at you with professional superiority, write out a prescription and order you to do thus and so. Rather he talks your case out with

you; lets you yourself get to the bottom of some of your difficulties and suggest some of the things you can do. He builds up your self-respect, helps to make you, in a measure, physician to yourself.

Or consider the salesman. We have all suffered from the pouring-out salesman, either the ruthless kind who rides roughshod over our feeble objections, or the blatantly glad-hand kind who tells us precisely what. We sign on the dotted line—often—but there is the bitterness of humiliation in our soul. Different is the salesman who shows respect for our intelligence, who tries to get us to express exactly what we ourselves wish, who listens to us as effectively as he talks to us; above all, who is cordial to us even after we have refused to sign. On some later day, we hunt him up and beg him to let us buy. Selling, to be a great art, must involve a genuine interest in the other person's needs. Otherwise it is only a subtle, civilized way of pointing a gun and forcing one into a temporary surrender.

Finally, consider the citizen. He finds that certain neighbors of his are all excited about the dangers to the Commonwealth. They have formed a militant society, have gone forth to crusade for righteousness. He does not join their group. He knows that crowd emotion is usually mistaken, oftentimes tragically so. He joins another kind of group—a half dozen or a score or a hundred, perhaps. He meets with them to find things out and to talk things over. He knows—as they know—that, being human, he has prejudices—of race, of nation, of religion, of social set. He tries to put his prejudices on the table, to expose them to view, to find out how much is actually prejudice and how much is honest truth. When he talks, he does not try to air his little egotisms, to sprunt up with his individual opinions, to shout

down opponents. He deliberately tries to discover and understand what is in the minds of those others so that they and he together may generate judgments which are true. And then, perhaps, when they have clarified their minds, he may join with them in action. But action in this case, will spring from intercreating intelligence, not from crowd emotion.

It should be obvious, then, that this intercreating process is productive of a type of person expansive in the highest degree. He is one whose mind is open, so that what others have to give of thought or interest may enter. He possesses a tolerant mind, for he seeks to place himself understandingly at the other's point of view. He is not opinionated, not prejudiced. He does not dominate; nor does he simply pour himself forth; nor does he hold himself aloof or apart. He moves with other minds, thinks with them, acts with them. He gives as well as takes. He plays fair mentally. Obviously, if we could develop many minds of this type, we should have a social and a public life—and an individual life—far richer and more effective than what, generally speaking, we now possess.

We are moving, now-a-days, out of our provincialisms towards world unity. Many of us are asking how that movement can be accelerated. Can it be done by building world institutions? Doubtless. But world institutions without world-mindedness will probably still be provincial. Far more fundamental, then, is the necessity for producing the type of minds which have the habit of thinking widely and understandingly with and through other minds. Such intercreating minds, making their linkages with other minds, will gradually build up more finely functioning groups, which, in

turn, making their wider linkages, will carry on a progressive unification of mankind.

### *The Group-Mind*

It is significant to note that small beginnings in the development of this type of mind are being made. In the more progressive elementary schools, there is an increasing insistence that children shall live their lives in and with the group. There must be no more pedagogical isolation of the individual—each child doing his own mental bit; each, as it were, a celibate mind, checked up by a celibate teacher. The child must, from the very beginning, learn to unite with others, to work with them, group-wise, as well as to play with them. Thus the child becomes, in a fine sense, a member of the group, thinking his thoughts not simply out of his own self-sufficient head, but, by uniting with his fellows, generating ideas and interests that are both theirs and his.

The higher grades and colleges still run largely on the celibate plane. "Each to himself is enough." The college student hears lectures; takes notes; repeats what he has heard back to the out-pouring teacher, who gives a mark of approval or condemnation. There are signs, however, that the relative sterility of this process is being detected. One thoughtful teacher, Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, is beginning an experiment in the University of Wisconsin which takes as its point of departure the elimination of the lecture-system and the inauguration of a technique of group mental life. The thought is that interchange, not the mere reception of ideas, is the vitalizing process. Again, in some of the honors work which is being introduced—notably at Swarth-

more College—the honor students gather for weekly conference with all their instructors *sitting as a group*; and with them they jointly discuss their subjects. Here again an intercreating process is carried on by instructor as well as student.

In adult education also—I except mere platform lecturing—discussion is increasingly being adopted. In discussion, mind meets mind. Each mind gives as well as takes. Each mind learns, in a measure, to become open to the other, to tolerate, to try to understand. In each mind there are born ideas and attitudes that come not solely out of itself but out of the interaction of minds.

And so we come to our point. The great individual is the intercreating individual. He listens. He unites his mind with other minds. And out of that union of his mind with many minds come a breadth and power of insight not otherwise achieved.

“Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.” (Tagore, *Gitanjali*.)

### *Ourselves and the Age*

But there is yet another intercreating that must be carried on. The individual lives in his age. He may live backward in that age or forward. If he lives backward, he will rest in its securities, will accept its established ways; he will fit, comfortably and uncreatively. If he lives forward, he will meet his age at the point at which it is shaping itself into something new.

The individual meets his age in three possible ways. In the first place, he may be unable to adapt himself even to

its minimum requirements. Then he goes down in defeat. We have noted a number of the neurotic types of defeat. Or, in the second place, he may be able to adapt himself so perfectly to the average requirements of his age that he lives in complete happiness—and never moves on. Or, in the third place, fully able to meet all the average requirements of his age, he may nevertheless refuse to surrender himself to its fixities. He may break away, forge ahead. His adaptation will then be to something greater still to come. Such an individual will doubtless be unhappy; but paradoxically, he will be happy in his unhappiness. His unhappiness will be that of a creative mind. The great individual is of the third type. He lives on the forward edge of his age, on the margin of its expanding life.

If we were to seek in the present age its most unique qualities, I think we should find four characteristics in which it differs strikingly from all the ages that have preceded it. I do not mean by this to assert that the present age is greater in all respects than the preceding ages. I mean simply that it has its own unique qualities, which mark the high level of its peculiar vitality.

To begin with, at its best, the present age is scientific-minded. We have had science of a sort sporadically throughout the centuries; but we have never before had a civilization in which the scientific type of mind ruled as it now begins to rule. What does one mean by the scientific type of mind? One means the mind that definitely refuses guesswork, old wives' tales, traditional precepts, maxims, racial or tribal superstitions, the mind that tries, in brief, deliberately and with carefully guarded techniques to find fact.

One of the outstanding figures in older civilizations was the priest. He ruled by playing upon the weaknesses of men,

by inspiring fear, awe, reverence for the unknown. He made no appeal to the vigorous adventurousness of men's minds. He numbed those minds with terror of the omnipotent. Another outstanding figure was the soldier. He ruled by force. His strategy was that of destruction. He had no interest in the power of intelligence to organize the constructive agencies of life. Priest and soldier are passing figures in our civilization. They no longer hold paramount authority. Authority is now with the man of science. I am speaking, of course, of our age at its best. At its worst, to be sure, the powers of superstition and of force still prevail.

The great individual, then, is, first and always, with the scientists. If he is a statesman, he seeks the facts. If he is a minister of religion, he joins with the march towards new truths. If he is a business man, he substitutes for the silly prejudices of his class, an insight into authentic human relations. If he is a citizen, he emancipates himself from the emotional half-truths of the crowd and tries to think as a reasonable member of the human race.

### *Inventing*

The second unique characteristic of our age is inventive-mindedness. The farther one goes back in history, the more one finds suspicion of the new. It is custom, fixity, that rules. Now invention rules, the unfixing of fixities. The truly modern individual learns to adopt this inventive attitude. He may, perhaps, reshape physical matter, or social or political institutions; or he may even reshape the basic assumptions upon which we rear our life. The great individual of the modern age is always a refashioner. He sees other possibilities, previsions greater achievements. He approaches his world as a world in the making. He finds in it the thrill of



the unexpected. To stand pat in that world is for him the gravest of sins.

### *Looking to the Future*

And so we pass naturally to the third characteristic of our age at its best: it is future-minded. In Greece, the accustomed attitude was that of looking back. There was the Golden Age of which the poets sang. In our own Christian civilization, there was—and still remains, in places—the turning back to an age of paradisiacal happiness. After Paradise the Fall. For such naive Christianity there could be only the slow struggle backward to a condition that had once been real. Increasingly, now, the attitude is different. The Golden Age lies in the future. Paradise, if such there be, is yet to be attained. We tend to think of the world-process as one not of devolution, but of progressive evolution. And so our modern mind turns hopefully to the future. Our vigorous concern is with that, not with the past. To be sure, old habits hang on. In our studies, we still pay an altogether disproportionate amount of attention to the past. We look to it almost pathetically for guidance, searching its musty records, often forgetting that the vigor of our intelligence increases only as we address ourselves energetically to the problems of the future.

The great individual, then, will be future-minded. His chief interest will be in forecasting possibilities. The vitality of his mind will be directed toward shaping his world into more adequate forms.

### *Humanism*

The fourth characteristic of our age at its best is its humanism. There is something very curious about the late-

ness of man's arrival at himself. The history of his scientific life shows him beginning first with that which is farthest away from himself—the starry heavens. No doubt he began with the far-away because he was relatively impotent to control the near-at-hand. As his power over physical things developed, however, he approached nearer himself. The astrologer-astronomer became the physicist and the chemist—manipulator of earth-matters. Then, with intermittent attempts at medicine, he became biologist. He studied life; but with that curious shyness about himself, he studied it chiefly in the lower creatures. At last, however, turning to the human world, he became sociologist. He studied human life in the group. But human life in the group is made up of human individuals. He found that there could be no understanding of the group processes without an understanding of the individuals who composed it. So he came at last back to his real starting point—himself. He turned psychologist.

That is perhaps the most significant thing that has occurred in this age. It has given the age its most characteristic quality. For this is, in truth, an age of psychology. It is one in which the most absorbing problem is that of understanding human beings.

A little over twenty-five years ago, Millicent Shinn published her curiously unconventional Ph.D. thesis, "The Biography of a Baby." It was received with sniffs and up-turned noses. A Doctor of Philosophy writing about a baby! But to-day the spirit of enquiry into infant life which inspired that book has become in large measure the spirit of the best in our age. Early in the century, G. Stanley Hall published his volume "Adolescence." It was a book which startled and shocked the genteel. It explored that curious

no-man's land of seething thoughts and emotions of maturing youth and maidenhood. The work of G. Stanley Hall may be said to have revolutionized our attitude toward young people in this country. We proceed now not by issuing ultimata but by trying to understand—all of which has made an impressive difference in education and home-life.

A little later in the century, an eager young economist, Carlton Parker, became fired by the new psychological insights. He saw the world of business and industry still operating in ignorance of the profounder impulses of human nature. He set about to humanize economics. His work, "The Casual Laborer," was a pioneering attempt to do for business and industry what long had been needed, in brief, to bring home the idea that by far the most essential factors involved in economic processes were men and women. These men and women needed to be understood. He tried to understand them. And so he helped to usher in a new era of economic thinking. To-day business and industry at their best are psychological-minded. They have passed beyond mere mechanical engineering to human engineering.

And so the story might be carried on. In one region and another, in all the civilized nations, the human individual has become the centre of our interest. He may be the maladjusted child or the maladjusted adult. He may be the young student at his desk. He may be the worker in the factory, or the servant in the kitchen, or the housewife seeking her way out of ancient servitudes. The age has frankly, and with increasing eagerness, come to center its attention upon human life.

And so the individual who lives on the vital boundaries of his age will be humanistic-minded. He will deplore all those processes—like war, persecution, exploitation—which

regard human beings as fit material upon which to exercise man's lower passions. He will be a vigorous defender of the oppressed. He will set his mind to the promotion of more adequate ways of organizing human life. In that process he will join with his fellows, intercreating with them. He will not go the way of evasion, sitting in his ivory tower, piping plaintive ditties to other ivory towers or writing despairing notes to other despairers. He will face the fact that human life has been fairly disagreeable, sometimes disgusting, and usually frustrated chiefly because it has not been adequately understood. He will gird up his intellectual loins and try to understand.

### *The Stagnant Mind*

By contrast, we note how thoroughly contractive and back in the stagnant interior of the age some minds are. There are those, for example, who hold passionately to the fixity of theological creed. As if a fixed creed could be the source of spiritual vitality! With such minds there is first of all an unwillingness to believe that new light can be found. They are contracted to their present beam. Also they lack spiritual inventiveness, that puzzling out of new possibilities which invigorates the imagination and gives practice to the intellectual powers. And so they are forever turned backward. The wonderful thing happened long ago! There is no great-thing-in-the-making, no master event to shape into being. To talk to them of a new religion is to cast them into a panic of fear that a sacrilege has been committed.

And so they are not really humanists, despite their concern with the destiny of man. For they refuse to face man

frankly—man, the growing creature, the creature of developing insight. They prescribe for an anciently conceived homunculus, fondly believing that, by incantation and prayer, they can grow a soul in that curious fabrication and save him for eternal life. Religion, like a good deal of the rest of our life, needs at last to concern itself with real human beings.

There are the minds, too, that are fixated in political dogma. They worship at the shrine of old constitutional conventions. They build up fairy-tales about old heroes. They burn books that depart one jot or tittle from the legends of the fathers. They are child-minds, not yet grown up to the full stature of a reality-facing age. They make of their politics a creeping paralysis, which moves from the cerebrum down.

There are the minds fixated in ethics. Ethical rules, to them, are commandments graven on stone and carried from on high. The rules are there once and for all. One must take them or leave them. There is no fresh chiselling to be done. There are no new-imagined ways of ethical life, no finer associations to be achieved, no ancient puzzles to be solved in ways hitherto unknown. Here again is the lack of the spirit of science, of inventive-mindedness and future-mindedness, and, above all, the lack of an authentic humanism. Here is the timid, provincial mind. The coming age, no doubt, will overhaul very materially its sexual ethics, legal ethics, political ethics, and its ethics of business and industry. Up to the present time these have been little more than rule of thumb. The ethical mind is destined, one suspects, to pass beyond a kind of custom-bound reverence to a thorough-going effort to understand human life in all its associational possibilities.

And then there is the horrified citizen. I have before me a copy of one of our liberal journals, in which are printed a number of indignant letters discontinuing subscriptions. They are from individuals, from libraries, from religious organizations—a dozen or more of them. They all strike the same note. One can see the writers flinging the journal into the farthest corners and sitting down to indite epistles. "You may consider yourselves banned from our midst," they all shout in one way or another. "We cannot subject ourselves and our young people to the dangers that lurk in your pages." Poor frightened folk! Unwilling to believe that honest criticism is never a danger, that only concealment is a danger. Here again we have the contractive mind, with all its stigmata of evasion. Like old Canute they cry angrily to the oncoming waves, "Begone! You have no right to encroach upon our peace and happiness!"

So the picture of our age becomes clear. At its best it is scientific-minded, inventive-minded, future-minded, humanistic-minded. All of these are expansive qualities. Each of them carries the individual beyond himself. Hence the individual who places himself at this growing edge of his age guarantees to himself the utmost of expansive life.

### *Conclusion*

How, now, does all that we have considered in these pages fit together? In Part I our central theme was evasional behavior. We noted in evasional behavior a chief source of psychological shortcomings. In Part II, we have been interested in the opposite type of behavior—the reality-facing, reality-mastering type, the type which moves towards rather than away from. We asked the question how

this more wholesome type of behavior might be developed. The answer, as we have seen, has taken us to the roots of most of those matters which involve the nurture and education of the human being.

Considering the individual not as a body plus a mind, but as an integrated body-mind, we found the need, first of all, for the elemental life-sustaining materials—air, sunshine and food. We found that we could not expect wholesomely developing individuals where these were largely lacking. But we discovered the need, also, for mental materials. Where these were absent, there could be only that contractive condition typical of minds bound within a small area of ideas. It was in this connection that we discovered one of the chief hindrances to wholesome psychological development. We found the schools largely operating in ways which bring about an active distaste of the learning process, so that despite the well-meant efforts of the educators, the average individual grows to maturity in a condition of more or less permanent intellectual arrest.

The significance that lay in this was, for us, fundamentally psychological. We were not interested in the large or small quantity of the individual's knowledge. We were interested rather in the type of mental habits developed in him by his education. Were they habits of mental curiosity, seeking-habits, problem-mastering habits; or were they habits of acceptance, of resting in what was given, and of distaste for searching further? A vigorous, expansive personality, we concluded, must be eager to go out and find. The schools were failing where they were not developing such individuals.

We noted also the fundamental need for associating individuals with great personalities. Here, too, education,

both in the home and the school, seemed peculiarly barren. We noted the way in which biography—not to speak of great living friendships—could serve to foster the expansive attitudes.

Then we entered upon matters which seemed to have been largely neglected in the systematic education of the individual. We examined music, which had been treated for the most part as a kind of decorative appendage to life. We found that music, on the contrary, fulfilled—or could fulfill—an essential function. Music did to us, in its way, what science did: it liberated us from mere particularity and ushered us into a kind of universality. This, we agreed, was of deepest significance; for if the individual was to be truly expansive, he must free himself from the bonds of the mere this and that. He must learn, in all sorts of ways, to feel as well as to think in wider areas.

We examined art—the art that makes its appeal to the eye. We seemed to discover a wealth of visual resources largely neglected, but even more largely, perhaps, mis-comprehended. We saw how the individual, trained to sense the universal in the particular, could be broadened in understanding and made vigorous in his grasp of life.

We examined poetry. Here, too, we discovered a means not only of widening the mental and emotional scope, but of bringing a stimulating zest to life. But we noted, also, how little the psychological resources of poetry had been utilized psychologically.

We found, in short, that the individual grows in greatness as, through music, art, poetry, science, and philosophy, he develops the power to experience the One in the Many. Here, then, we discovered a basic clue to all personality-building. Education, if it was to be worth any-



thing profound and lasting, must, we concluded, so shape its various undertakings as to bring this wider seeing, hearing and thinking into the individual's life.

And then we listened to conversation. We noted the this-and-that talkers. We detected in such talkers the symptoms of a mental meagreness that might, perhaps, undergo salutary correction; and we suggested the need for a training in the kind of talk that escaped the pathetic irrelevance of a mere miscellaneousness.

Next we noted a most important aspect of our mental and emotional life. That life, we found, grew strong by doing. Here, again, we discovered much to criticize in our prevailing educational procedures, as likewise in the prevailing habits of our individual mental life, where ideas and emotions too often remained actionless, thereby growing morbidly or sentimentally inward. The person who was to develop in psychological expansiveness must, as we saw, form the habit of living out, in some way or measure, those ideas and emotions which seemed to him to be admirable.

Then we observed that there are life-destroying ideas and emotions. These are the psychological poisons. Sometimes they come from the outside; sometimes they are generated within ourselves. A primary task, we found, was to keep ourselves free of these life-destroying factors either by bringing to bear upon them the renovating effect of ideas, or by eliminating them completely from our system, or by changing them into livable form.

Then we examined that little-understood power possessed by man, the sense of humor. We saw that it was far more than a mere matter of pleasantry, that it had profound relation to the basic problem of developing a wholesome individuality. We saw, in brief, that the secret of humor

lay in one's ability to transform a contractive attitude into an expansive one. This ability, we surmised, was not one that was born in us, but one which, when clearly understood, could be successfully developed.

And finally, we discovered in the intercreating mind our supreme type of personality. In that type we found the expansiveness which not only urges the individual towards others, but which so relates him to those others, in the spirit of his age, that they and he bring to birth what neither could create in isolation.

And so we bring our analysis to a close. The handling of our behavior deficiencies, we said, must lie not in an isolated attack upon symptoms, but in a careful and prolonged upbuilding of the entire person. What we have developed has, as it were, been a scheme of basic education. As such, it is applicable to the schools and colleges. But it is just as applicable to nurture in the home. And it is equally applicable to the adult life that has left behind it both its childhood home and the schools.

One of our chief needs to-day, no doubt, is a grasp of what all education is about. Our whole civilization has been changing with dizzy rapidity; and the schools have not been permitted to remain unaffected. Subjects have been heaped on subjects. Teachers have been hurried in to supply increasing demands. And they have had to readjust their work almost before the initial adjustment was made. So we have none of us had time to sit back and think about it all. We have managed to train our young people to know certain things and to take certain jobs. But we have hardly as yet begun to think of training them as individuals.

That will be our next great concern. When we seriously

go at that problem, we shall probably begin to make some such analysis as we have attempted in these chapters. We shall seek to know how we can build up individuals who are expansive in all the fundamental aspects of life.

## POSTSCRIPT

Were there space, we might now, in this second part, do something similar to what was attempted in Part I. There, as the reader will remember, we employed the method of seeing ourselves writ large. It was our aberrations, however, our weaknesses, that we saw thus magnified on the psychoneurotic screen. Might we not now, in like manner, magnify our positive and expansive qualities?

The task would be a most alluring one, for it would bring us into contact with the great individuals of the race. There would be Socrates, for example, type *par excellence* of the intercreating mind. Socrates was great, as the oracle once reminded his fellow-Greeks, because he knew that he did not know. He did not come bristling with his own opinions; he had no impervious, dominating egotisms; he was not all wrapped up in a kind of finality of self-congratulation. He went out modestly and sincerely to discover what other people thought. And in the process of talking with them, simply and searchingly, he brought to birth ideas of which they themselves had been quite unaware. But what was more, by this give-and-take process of his, he brought to birth ideas in himself; so much so that when these ideas emerged, he was the most astonished of all.

It would be a pleasant task to paint the picture of Socrates. For Socrates is convincingly like what any average individual might be, if only that average individual could grasp the idea of emptying himself of pretension and trying

to build up ideas by the intercreating process of discussion with his fellows.

The trouble with the great ones is that they are usually for us too great. They appear to have nothing in common with ourselves. It would be illuminating, then, to see in such persons simply a higher degree of that quality in us all which we have called expansiveness. Socrates was expansive in his peculiar way. He was unable to remain contracted within the area of his own ideas and opinions. He felt compelled to check himself up by contact with other minds. Therein lay his simple greatness. There was nothing superhuman about him. His way of mental life was one open to any normal person.

If we looked merely for the peculiar element of expansiveness in each of our heroes, we should, I think, bring these heroes far nearer to our ordinary life, so that they might serve more effectively as indications in the large of what normal life could be. Jesus, for example, looked upon as a God, or as the supreme type of humanity, is distressingly beyond us. But regarded as a young man singularly expansive in his mental and emotional outreach, he is seen as unusually wise because he escaped the average condition of being shut up tight within himself. All his parables and sayings are essentially the utterance of a life that learned to sink itself in other life. He could not help being one even with the universe, for the outward sweep of his feelings carried him into union with that vital oneness he called God.

But it would not be necessary to confine ourselves merely to our demi-gods. There have been numbers of individuals nearer the normal level who have exhibited one or another or many of the expansive qualities mentioned. To take them

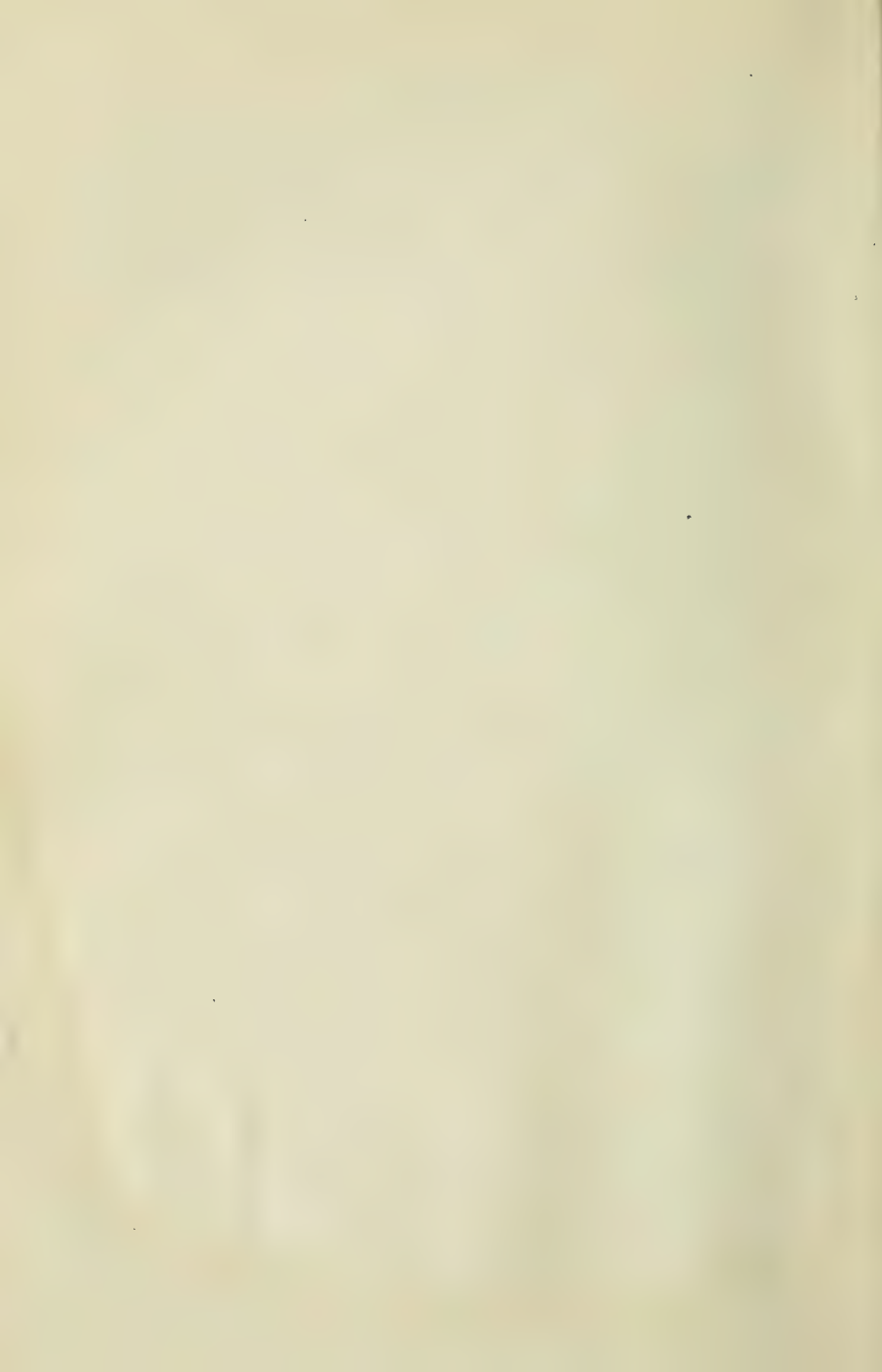
almost at random: Roger Williams, who could identify himself so thoroughly with the cause of the exploited Indian that he denounced his Puritan fellows and suffered exile, who could likewise make his stand for religious toleration and suffer hatred and persecution; Clara Barton, who, in a world in which war and its ravages were callously taken for granted, could feel farther than most people, could sense the needs of the war victims. When she distributed food and clothing to the needy in Paris, she was called an "angel." She was, of course, only a person who could feel more widely and think more penetratingly than most.

Or there was Peter Cooper, who founded the Cooper Institute in New York. One of the first of the modern type of employers to be interested in his men, he conceived the idea that the basic need of life was intelligence, and that intelligence could be generated only through the truth-seeking processes. Or there was General Armstrong, who founded the Hampton Institute for negroes, and Booker T. Washington, who founded Tuskegee. Both these men had the expansive power to see what was fundamentally needed by a down-trodden race.

Or there were the mental expansives—Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Huxley, Pasteur. Or the inventive expansives—Watt, Stephenson, Morse and the rest. Not all these individuals, of course, were expansive in all respects. Nevertheless, whatever value lay in them, lay precisely in their power, in some manner, to pass out of a too readily accepted contractiveness of life.

I need not go on. The great individuals have been great because, in one way or another, they have pushed beyond the ordinary limits of the ego. To take up, now, each of them as a type of a particular expansiveness would indeed

have been a grateful task. But the foregoing analysis has developed to such length that no space remains. And so, may I be permitted to cast one final burden upon the reader? He has worked through the analysis. Will he not now illuminate it all by searching out great examples in the life?





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